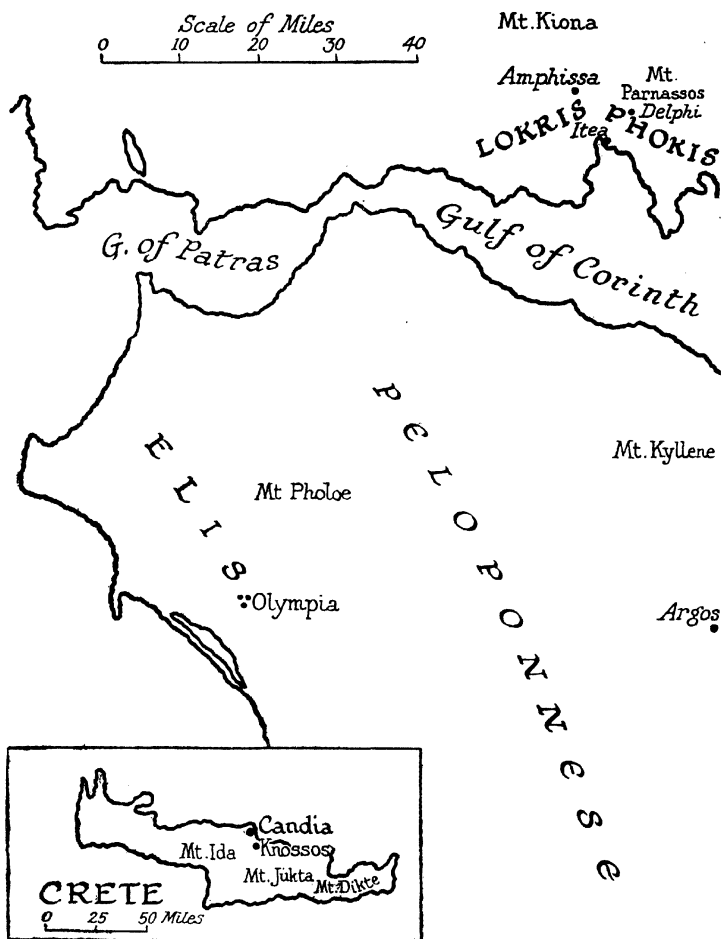


# MAP OF GREECE

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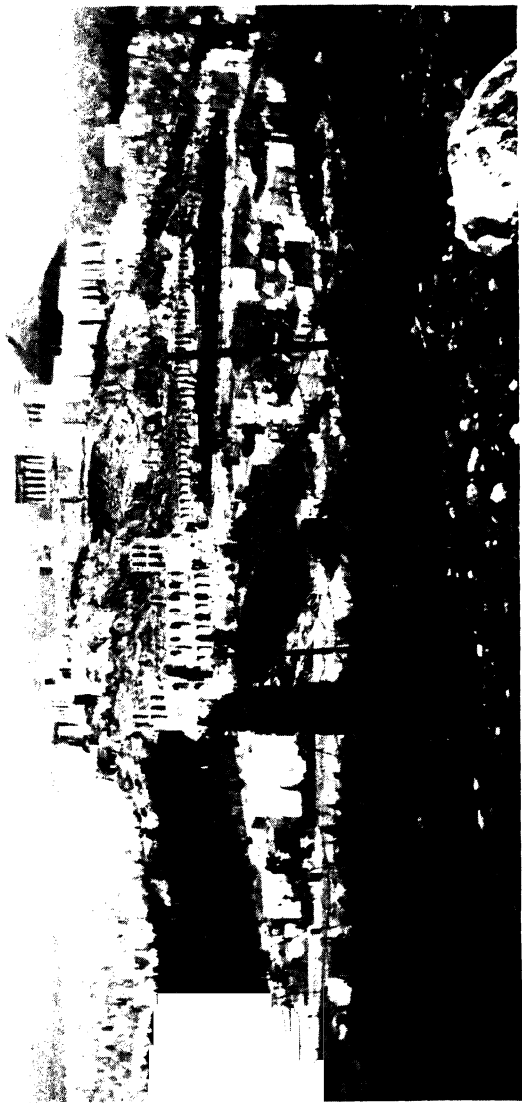
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Travel





# WANDERINGS IN GREECE





*Photo. by Author.*

ATHENS: THE ACROPOLIS FROM PHILOPAPPOS.

# WANDERINGS IN GREECE

BY  
F. S. BURNELL

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## FOREWORD

**M**Y sole apology for adding yet another recruit to the already monstrous regiment of books on Greece is that I believe a work of this kind to be genuinely needed. Apart from the fact that no guide-book for Greece has been published in English since before the War, to visit Greece with a guide-book as one's sole source of information is to miss at least half the interest of the country, while to travel accompanied by a complete reference library is obviously out of the question. The present volume—an attempt to solve the problem—is, to the best of my belief, unique in its scope. It is hoped that it may prove especially useful to the actual visitor: but even if it does no more than inspire the stay-at-home reader to explore for himself the inexhaustible interest of e.g. Sir J. G. Frazer's *Pausanias*, Professor A. B. Cook's *Zeus*, and Sir Arthur Evans' *Palace of Minos*—not to mention many other works included in the appended bibliography—its appearance will have been justified, and its shortcomings, I trust, forgiven.

It should, perhaps, be added that the original Greek spelling, so far as possible, has usually been adhered to, save for a few names—Socrates, for example—whose English orthography is too firmly established to be tampered with. The more familiar “stadium” has been adopted occasionally as a variant for “stadion,” but the latinization of Greek words has otherwise been generally avoided.

F. S. B.



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## CHAPTER I

### THE DAWN IN THE ÆGEAN

GREECE is one of those names, like Rome or the East, which are not so much labels as incantations. It conjures before the imaginative vision a land to be found on no ordinary atlas—a land east of the sun, west of the moon, where the radiant forms of gods and heroes move in an ampler æther, a diviner air, than ever enveloped our own workaday world. If we no longer, as in the Renaissance, regard the men of antiquity as embodying a standard of mental and physical superiority which we can but vainly envy, we are perhaps sometimes apt to forget that Greek art and philosophy did not wholly perish with Praxiteles and Aristotle, nor Greek statesmanship with Peisistratos and Solon, and that brave men have existed in Greece, not only before Agamemnon, but even since the days of Leonidas and Epaminondas. This is not the place to dwell upon the heroism displayed by the Greeks during the War of Liberation, much less during the last disastrous campaign in Asia Minor: but an earlier episode, less familiar to Western Europe, but graven ineffaceably in the heart of every Hellene, would alone suffice to prove, were proof required, that the spirit of Thermopylæ still burns as brightly as ever despite the passing of more than twenty centuries.

When, by the peace of 1573, the Turks were finally confirmed in their possession of the Greek peninsula, a few isolated localities, aided by their insignificance or inaccessi-

bility, still—for a time at least—maintained a stubborn resistance to the invaders. Among these were Souli, a village situated among the more westerly ranges of Epirus, and the little harbour-town of Parga, hardly more than half a score of miles distant, which together succeeded in preserving their independence for over three hundred years. On the fall of Napoleon, Parga, together with the Ionian Islands, came under the ægis of Great Britain. In 1819, to the despair and rage of the inhabitants, it was ceded to Turkey, represented by the celebrated Ali Pasha of Janina, whose schemes for establishing himself in Epirus independently of the Porte were eventually terminated by his assassination. The inhabitants of Parga, unable to save their town, burned it to the ground, and withdrew with British assistance to Corfu, after rifling the very graves lest even their dead should be subject to the hated despotism of the Turk. A heap of smouldering ashes alone remained to the Turks of their long-coveted prize.

Souli, however, still held out indomitably among her mountains. Her position, indeed, was all but impregnable, for the only approach known to the Turks was such that a handful of defenders could hold it almost indefinitely against an army. Time after time the Albanians of the Sultan of Janina had attempted, openly or by surprise, to storm the pass, only to be driven back with heavy loss. It was no secret that the Souliotes had sworn to die rather than surrender, and not a man among them but was a keen marksman and a fearless fighter even before he had entered his teens.

Treachery, at long last, brought about the fall of Souli. Besides the pass so long and bravely held, there was another way, secret from all but a few: and one of these, it is said, betrayed the path to Ali and his men. Under cover of

the darkness, the kilted Albanian mountaineers, their fierce eyes gleaming hungrily, and their white teeth showing under their long moustaches, made their stealthy way across the mountains: in the grey of the dawn their wild yell woke the sleeping Souliotes to meet the fire of their long muskets, the sweeping slash of their razor-edged yataghans. Hopelessly outnumbered and taken by surprise, the men, the very boys, of Souli fought desperately till all had fallen. Greedy for plunder, the Albanians burst into the little church, where the village priest, arrayed for Mass, stood awaiting them before the altar. Called upon to surrender, he plucked a pistol from his robes, and fired into the floor, beneath which lay Souli's store of powder; and a thunderous explosion buried the heroic priest, together with his assailants, under the shattered ruins of the building.

The self-sacrifice of the able-bodied Souliotes had given time for the women and infants, together with a handful of old men, to make their escape southwards in the hope of reaching the Ambrakiot gulf. But their flight was discovered, and, pursued by the Albanians, they were barely able to take temporary refuge on a lofty and waterless rock, scaled by a single narrow path, and equally barren of shelter or food. While the old men held the path, the women assembled on the level space at the summit, enclosed by a sheer precipice, hundreds of feet in depth, from whose foot a level plain extends southwards to the sea. Escape was utterly impossible, surrender not to be thought of. Forming in a circle, each with her infant clasped in one arm, and the other laid lightly about the shoulders of her neighbour, they began to dance. Led by Droso ("Dew"), the daughter of the dead chieftain, it was just such a dance as one may still see to-day performed by Greek peasants on festivals and holidays: and as they danced they sang the song of

generations of Souliote women before them—a song born of the menace that had hung so long above Souli.

As the fish cannot live but in the sea,  
As the flower cannot bloom by the salt waves,  
So the women of Souli cannot live without liberty.  
Farewell, ye springs! farewell, ye woods!  
Farewell, beloved mountains!  
Farewell, bright sun!  
Farewell, sweet life, farewell for ever!

Calmly, almost joyously, now advancing, now retreating, now stepping lightly with a swaying motion from left to right, the singers danced there upon the summit of the rock, while a violet haze deepened upon the mountains, and the westering sun turned the distant gulf to a line of burnished bronze. Shots and cries from the pathway accompanied the song, whose volume grew ever slighter as, on the conclusion of each figure, a dancer stepped backwards from the narrowing ring, and leaped without a cry into the void. When the last defender of the path lay dead or dying, and the Albanians emerged upon the level space at the top, they saw to their amazement only a young girl dancing by herself on the dizzy edge of the precipice. "Farewell, beloved mountains!" she sang, "farewell, bright sun!" As though unconscious or disdainful of their approach, the chief's daughter completed the last steps of her measure, and even as their hands were outstretched to seize her, sprang outwards to her death. Of all Souli's population not a man, woman or child had fallen alive into the hands of the enemy.

With evidence such as this, it is difficult to maintain that the modern Greek has little in common with his classical ancestor. On the legacy of ancient Greece to modern civilization it is, perhaps, superfluous to dilate: all that was

of permanent value in Greek thought and culture has long become practically an integral part of our intellectual consciousness. But for that very reason, possibly, we do not invariably bear in mind the extent of our indebtedness. That the exertions of the Greeks in the fifth century B.C. kept Europe free from the domination of Asia, as Byzantium—Greek likewise—was to keep her free down to the fifteenth century after Christ, was enormously important, not only in itself, but because the Greeks deserved their victory. The gifts which Greece had in keeping to bestow upon the world were essentially greater than any within the capacity of Persia or of Carthage: and perhaps the greatest of all was an example of speculative daring and intellectual freedom, which was not only unprecedented, but shines like a solitary and distant star across subsequent ages of ignorance and superstition. One gift only was denied to the Greek genius—that of unity: the incorrigible inter-enmity of the Greek states laid them at last helpless beneath the feet of the great Power in the west. It is sometimes said that modern Europe begins with ancient Greece: and at a time when Europe's war-wounds are still daily inflamed by racial and economic dissension, one is tempted to ask oneself whether the fate of Greece is to be that of Europe also.

In point of fact, the story of European civilization begins some thousands of years earlier. Long before the first Greeks made their appearance on the shores of the great central sea, the Ægean was already the home of a wonderful Bronze Age culture which radiated its influence from end to end of the Mediterranean. Forgotten though it was for more than three thousand years, the ghost of that civilization continued to haunt the lands where it had once chiefly flourished, and left its traces deeply impressed upon the art,



the legends and the religion of the Greeks. But the Greeks themselves were by no means a single nation: the deity of one tribe was not the deity, or at any rate the principal deity, of another. Further religious variety arose from their contact with the East, as well as with the original inhabitants of the peninsula. The result is that Greek religion, when we arrive at historical times, is a curious mixture. Zeus, the acknowledged king of the gods, is a kind of feudal monarch, to whom the other deities, each supreme in his or her own domain, render little more than conventional homage: while the most primitive and even sanguinary superstitions continue to flourish side by side with such lofty conceptions of the divine nature as found expression in the sculpture of Pheidias and the mysticism of Plotinus.

The earliest inhabitants of Greece seem to have been a short, dark and long-headed folk, belonging to that "Mediterranean race," as they are called, of Eur-African origin, which had been scattered along the shores of the inland sea for thousands of years before the dawn of history. At the time of their first appearance of which any trace has so far been discovered, this race had already emerged from the palæolithic into the neolithic stage of culture. In the large island of Crete, which lies like a stepping-stone between three continents—Europe, Asia and Africa—neolithic habitation is believed to go back to at least 8,000, and perhaps to 10,000 years before the birth of Christ.

The geographical position of Crete exposed her at an early age to external influences. The introduction of copper seems to have taken place about 3000 B.C., possibly owing to an actual immigration from pre-dynastic Egypt: by way of Cyprus and Syria the highly developed culture of the great Asiatic empires likewise made itself more or

less felt. The age of bronze had begun: the islanders now entered definitely on a phase of civilization which reached its first climax about 2000 B.C., and finally culminated in a brief period of exceptional brilliance between 1500 and 1450 B.C. This Bronze Age civilization of Crete is generally known as "Minoan" after the semi-legendary king, Minos, whose palace of Knossos, more than any other excavated site, has enabled archæologists to understand how that civilization developed.

Naturally this progress of an island people connoted an extensive commerce by sea. High-pooped Cretan ships penetrated to every corner of the Ægean and the Black Sea, and even, it would seem, as far west as Sicily and Spain. A steady intercourse, save during her domination by the Hyksos between 1900 and 1700 B.C., was maintained with Egypt, where a vast system of harbour works was carried out at Alexandria, which was still in use in Homeric times, more than a thousand years later. Wool and hides, for which Cretan oil and Cretan pottery doubtless helped to pay, were imported from the pastoral regions of Europe, and an important trade in tin and copper was carried on, not only with the great metal-producing region of the Danube basin, but even, it would appear, with Britain. Minoan colonies arose on the Greek mainland—perhaps also in Syria—and the Minoan navy did efficient police-work in keeping down the pirates who were becoming an ominously frequent phenomenon.

It was probably during the third millennium before Christ that the first scattered bands of Aryan invaders from north and east began to drift downwards into the Balkan peninsula, conquering or coalescing with the older inhabitants. Among the rest, there trekked into Thessaly a people who may well be the ancestors of the Achæans of Homer, and who,

if not the first Greek-speakers, were perhaps the first real Greeks to settle on Hellenic soil. From the remains of their habitations found at Dimini in Thessaly it is clear that they dwelt in rectangular houses of crude brick, built on a low stone foundation, and "of a type in which we already see the prototype of the later Achæan house."<sup>1</sup>

In 1450 B.C. the great city and palace of Minoan Knossos was destroyed, never to rise again. It was the work, not of permanent invaders but of raiders, perhaps rebels from her own powerful colonies on the Greek mainland. At all events, the centre of supremacy was henceforth transferred to Mycenæ, in the Argolid, which was now the richest and strongest city on the Ægean coasts. The old Cretan culture did not suddenly disappear: even the ruins of the palace seem to have been partially reoccupied for a time, and Cretan pottery retained certain characteristics to the end. Despite close and obvious relationship, however, the civilization henceforth represented by Mycenæ, whose remains are found extending over a wide area of Greece and the adjoining islands, exhibits various well-marked variances from the parent-culture of Minoan Crete. The term "Mycenean" is therefore generally employed to distinguish the later mainland culture from the earlier Minoan civilization which had its centre in Knossos.

Even at this remote period, fourteen or fifteen centuries before Christ, the population of Greece was probably already largely Greek, speaking the Greek tongue, from the mountains of Thessaly to the southern shores of the Peloponnese. The hill-dwellers of Arkadia, who spoke a purely Greek language, even declared that they had lived among their mountains before the birth of the moon. "It is not improbable," writes Professor J. B. Bury, "that by 2000 B.C.

<sup>1</sup> H. R. Hall, *Civilization of Greece in the Bronze Age*, 1923.

Zeus, the great Indo-European lord of heaven, was invoked and worshipped throughout the length and breadth of the land." By the thirteenth century, at all events, the process of assimilation had been completed. This is the age, generally speaking, described in the Homeric poems: an age in which the old Creto-Mycenean civilization was steadily dying out under the pressure of a ruder and more primitive environment. Most prominent among the Greek tribes were the Achæans, who had now made themselves supreme in Argolis, and had even established settlements in Crete itself. The northern Achæans, with their fair hair, their zest for battle and plunder, and their markedly seaman-like qualities, seem to have been the Vikings of the early world. The earliest reference to the "Akhaivasha" in an historical document occurs in an Egyptian papyrus which describes them as engaged with other barbarous folk "who fight to fill their bellies daily" in an unsuccessful raid on the Egypt of Pharaoh Mernptah in 1223 B.C.

In 1190 or thereabouts the Achæans took the leading part in the united expedition of the Greek tribes against the great and wealthy city of Troy. The fall of Troy was, in the course of time, to give rise to the first supreme achievement of European literature, but its immediate result was nothing less than the final blow to the old Ægean civilization. North, west and east, the last remains of the old order were crumbling: all forms of art practically ceased to exist in an age of folk-wandering and barbarism: a hungry swarm of pirates swept the sea, plundering, slaying and sinking. In Greece itself other far-reaching changes were wrought by the arrival of the Dorians, a barbarous people, probably Illyrian, whose great swords of iron—a metal hitherto almost unknown—redly inscribed the dawn of a new age. In the Peloponnese especially they established

a permanent supremacy. Mycenæ and Tiryns were laid in ruins, while Argos, Corinth and even Megara on the Saronic Gulf henceforth became Dorian strongholds: and in the valley of the Eurotas arose that chief of all Dorian settlements which, under the name of Sparta, was one day to aspire to, and even for a while attain, the hegemony of all Greece.

The first Greek invaders of Attica seem to have been the Kekropes, whose advent later tradition assigned to 1581 B.C. Probably it was they who introduced the worship of Erechtheus, the "Cleaver" or "Render," a god of the lightning whom they doubtless worshipped on the site of the present Erechtheion till the submersion of the Kekropes beneath a later and alien swarm of Greek conquerors compelled him to give place to the newly-arrived goddess, Athena. By the fifth century, or perhaps earlier, Erechtheus, in Athenian belief, had become identified with Poseidon,<sup>1</sup> the sea-god, who originally was but another manifestation of Zeus.<sup>2</sup> Legend told how Poseidon and Athena had contended for the possession of the Acropolis; how each had set a "token" (*sêmeion*) upon it—the one a salt "sea" or spring, the other an olive tree; and how, by a characteristic compromise, the victorious Athena had allowed her rival to share the dwelling that had once been his own. Sheltering under Poseidon's mantle, Erechtheus still retained something of his old divinity: but in process of time even this was mostly stripped from him, and the old god may have been thankful at last to be regarded merely as one of the early hero-kings of Attica, whose autochthonous origin was represented in art by a serpent's tail.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, II, i, 792 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The name of Poseidon is simply a derivation from *Potei Dán*—Lord Zeus.

The worship of Athena, possibly, may itself involve traces of a far older worship. According to Professor M. P. Nilsson,<sup>1</sup> Athena is "a direct descendant of the Minoan palace-goddess," her name belonging to "a group of words, chiefly place-names, characterized by the ending - ἡνη, Doric -άνα, which leading philologists are inclined to consider as pre-Greek." Sir Arthur Evans has likewise pointed out that Athena "in many ways recalls the great mother-goddess of Crete," which indeed claimed to be her birth-place, while Professor A. B. Cook notes that she is not infrequently represented with the Double-Axe of the Minoan goddess, which was likewise carried at the head of processions on the occasion of Athenian embassies to Delphi. It looks rather as though some degree of syncretization had taken place at an early age between the new conquering goddess and the old goddess of the earlier inhabitants, among whom her worship doubtless lingered on for centuries.

Other survivals from "Pelagic"—i.e. prehistoric—days are not wanting, even now, on the Acropolis, such as the two small posterns and stairways on the north, and the stair leading to the old castle spring, which was called "the Hidden Water," or Klepsydra, probably because none could see whither it vanished. Still more important are various sections of a massive fortification-wall, built of irregular blocks of blue-grey limestone, which at one time completely encircled the summit of the primitive citadel. On the west, where attack was easiest, it seems originally to have been supplemented by an outer ward, called in later times the Pelargikon or Pelasgikon, or sometimes the "Ninegate" (*enneapylon*,) concerning whose nature and extent there

<sup>1</sup> *The Minoan-Mycenean Religion and Its Survival in Greek Religion*, 1927.

is considerable uncertainty.<sup>1</sup> It seems to have been completely destroyed at the time of the Persian wars, while the remains of the old fortifications on the summit, which had been considerably strengthened under the Peisistratids, were lost to sight for the most part under later buildings and the imposing battlements which still frown down on the city.

Looking up at the Acropolis as it lifts proudly above Athens, we see how inevitably the precipitous mass of rock was marked out by nature for human habitation and defence. Obviously, who held the fortress on the hill could make himself at his ease master of the surrounding plain: and in fact the *synoikismos* of Attica, the welding into a single political and economic unit, with Athena's city as its capital—a step analogous to the formation of the City of the Four Regions beside the Tiber—was traditionally believed to have been accomplished as early as the middle of the thirteenth century B.C. This important achievement was attributed to the hero-king Theseus, whose personality, if he ever actually existed, is hopelessly obscured beneath a cloud of legend.

Little indeed can be stated with certainty concerning any of these shadowy monarchs, from Kekrops to Kodros, the last of his line, who is said to have sought a hero's death in battle against the Dorians in obedience to an oracle which had foretold victory to the side whose leader should be slain. In historical times their place was taken by the King Archon (*archon basileus*), who, as one of the principal magistrates or *archons* of Athens, dealt almost exclusively with religious matters, and in some sort resembled the *rex sacrificulus* of Rome. The fact that the kings by whom they had once

<sup>1</sup> See Professor M. L. D'Ooge, *The Acropolis of Athens*, 1903 (pp. 21-31 and Appendix II).

been ruled had claimed to be actual incarnations of Zeus was probably familiar to few Athenians of the Periclean Age, but in some circles at least it had by no means been forgotten. This is clearly demonstrated by the frieze relief from the east end of the Parthenon which is now in the Elgin room of the British Museum. There, in the very midst of the assembled Olympians, the Archon Basileus and his wife, the Basilinna, stand side by side, as ritual "king" and "queen," to whom attendants are proffering the sacred *peplos* of Athena and two of the cushioned stools of honour known as *diphroi*. The "king" is dressed in what are

doubtless the Cretan garments and royal footgear which we know to have been his distinctive attire. Court etiquette is conservative, and these articles of apparel were reminiscent of "Minoan" predecessors. But to complete his costume he needs a *himation* [the characteristic Greek outer garment]: and it seems not unreasonable to conjecture that he is about to put on immortality in the shape of Athena's *peplos*. This done, the "king" and "queen" will take their places on the *diphroi* set for them between the deities enthroned on either hand.<sup>1</sup>

To revert to the Acropolis, however, it had been not only a fortress but a sanctuary. "The Ægean king," it has been well said, "was the predecessor of the Greek god . . . the Greek temple, if not the lineal descendant of the Mycenaean palace, at least had an ancestry in common."<sup>2</sup> Homer in the *Odyssey* (vii, 81) speaks of Athena returning to the "well-built house of Erechtheus" as though it were her own home: and it is more than probable that her earliest sanctuary on the Acropolis was the palace—evidently Mycenaean in type—whose scanty remains have been found south of and immediately adjoining the Erechtheion.

<sup>1</sup> A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, II, ii, 1135,

<sup>2</sup> Anderson-Spiers-Dinsmoor, *The Architecture of Greece*, 1927.



Again in the *Iliad* (ii, 630), Homer calls the Acropolis "the goodly citadel of Athena, the domain of Erechtheus," adding that the goddess gave Erechtheus "a resting-place in her own rich sanctuary." We have already seen how this came about; but others, too, divine or semi-divine, claimed their meed of worship on the Acropolis, sometimes on the ground of prior possession. Here, for example, was the tomb of the eponymous ancestor of the Kekropes, the legendary Kekrops himself, reputed founder of the city, and the sanctuary of his daughter, Pandrosos, the "All-Dewy," who is obviously an old nature-goddess. At the north-west angle of the hill, near the Klepsydra spring, Erechtheus' own tomb was pointed out up to a late period. The grottoes still visible close by, on whose walls votive tablets have left their marks, were sacred respectively to Pan and Apollo, while a sanctuary of the priestess Aglauros, another daughter of Kekrops, lay further along the northern slope of the hill.

*O haunts of Pan !*

(sings the poet)

*O crags that yawn  
Below the cliffs, where, on the soft green lawn  
Before Athena's shrine,  
Hand in hand the maidens three,  
Aglauros' daughters, fair to see,  
Their mazy steps entwine;  
Singing, swaying, fast or slow,  
As the reed-notes fade or flow,  
When thou, Pan, pipest from thy cave below!*<sup>1</sup>

Numerous other shrines and altars were scattered over the expanse enclosed by the walls—of Zeus, Ge, Hephaistos and other gods. Between the Propylæa and the Parthenon

<sup>1</sup> Eur., *Ion*.

we can still see the level area once occupied by the sanctuary of Artemis from Brauron in Attica. The Brauronion contained no temple: it was simply a sacred precinct enclosing an altar and an ancient image of the goddess, which was succeeded later by a work from the chisel of Praxiteles. Young girls dressed in bear-skins—substituted at a later period by saffron-coloured robes—danced a bear-dance each year at the festival of the goddess, who, though she had come to be identified with the “Maiden most holy, Mother of Light,” had clearly at one time been nothing but a sacred Bear herself, such as is still worshipped by the Ainus of Japan. In the Acropolis museum there is a small stone figure of a seated bear found during the excavations on the hill, which must have been the gift of some pious votary. There were also similar precincts dedicated to Athena herself under such special aspects as Health, Victory, or Protector of the Arts.

We can form some idea of what the temples of this early period were like from the precious remains—likewise in the Acropolis museum—of the sculptures with which they were once adorned. The oldest of all is a gable-relief of the seventh century, which shows Herakles slaying the Hydra, while his faithful charioteer, Iolaos, warns him of the approach of a monstrous crab sent by Hera to the Hydra’s assistance. In another we see the hero’s introduction to Olympos, with Zeus in his sky-blue robe seated on his cushioned throne: while a third, of great interest, shows us part of the old double temple of Athena and Poseidon, with the sacred olive-tree of the goddess outside it.

A grim memory had centred about this temple since the early years of the seventh century, when a young noble named Kylon had seized the Acropolis with a view to making himself tyrant. Finding, however, the attempt hopeless,

he succeeded in making his escape into exile, while his followers took refuge in the temple. A solemn promise that their lives should be spared induced them to surrender, but passion was stronger than promises, and they were all put to death. In the circumstances the crime amounted to sacrilege, and to relieve the city from the curse consequent on such a deed its prime movers, the Alkmæonid clan, were sentenced to perpetual banishment. Not for more than a century did they succeed in winning readmittance to their native city: and since Kleisthenes and Perikles were both Alkmæonids, their success was of no small importance to the future destinies of Athens.

Meanwhile a new temple had been erected to the Guardian-Goddess of the city on the actual site of the old Mycenaean *megaron*—a simple affair, consisting merely of a cella and an opisthodomos, or back chamber, which was used as a treasury, while at each end the lateral walls were produced to enclose a small two-columned portico. A lucky chance has preserved some of the sculptures from the temple pediments. On one side is Herakles grappling with Proteus, whose writhing body is covered with red and blue scales: on the other is a triple-bodied and triple-headed monster, half serpent, half human, whose identity is still somewhat of a mystery, and whose blue beard has earned him an obvious nickname. It lends to these ancient specimens of Attic sculpture an additional interest to realize that they must have been daily beheld by Solon, the great law-giver and statesman who, in Bury's words, not only laid the foundations but shaped the framework of Athenian democracy.

The new temple supplemented, but did not supplant, the old double shrine on the site of the Erechtheion. Known as the "ancient temple," or "temple of the Polias" (i.e.

Guardian of the city), this still housed the primitive wooden image, or *xoanon*, of the goddess—so old and holy that it was said to have fallen from heaven—while her sacred serpent, Erichthonios, born, it was believed, from the union of Ge, the earth-goddess, and Hephaistos, the god of fire, still dwelt in his crevice beneath the temple, and was fed with honey-cakes once a month. The new temple, since it was 100 Attic feet long, was known as the Hekatompedon (temple 100 feet in length). But the greater luxury and refinement of the Ionian cities along the Asia Minor coast were now beginning to penetrate to Athens. In 540 B.C. Peisistratos, a brilliant soldier who had been largely instrumental in annexing Salamis to Attica, and thereby dealing a heavy blow at neighbouring Megara, Athens' commercial rival, made himself sole ruler or "tyrant" (in the Greek sense of the word), and one of his first acts was to transform the temple in a style more worthy of the goddess and her city. The cella was enclosed within a fine Doric peristyle, and the old pediment sculptures were substituted by a gigantomachia, i.e. scenes from the warfare of the gods against the giants, the children of Earth, who had attempted to storm Olympus. One of these groups—Athena transfixing the giant Enkelados—still exists in the Acropolis museum, and shows a conspicuous advance in technical mastery.

The restoration of the temple was part of a widespread campaign instituted by Peisistratos for the improvement and embellishment of Athens. A subterranean aqueduct was constructed from Mount Hymettos: the "Fair-Flowing" (*Kallirrhoe*) spring near the old Agora on the west of the Acropolis was converted into a fine conduit called the Nine-Spout Fountain, or *Enneakrounos*: and the foundations were laid of a temple to Olympian Zeus, designed on so

colossal a scale that it remained uncompleted for more than six centuries. Even more important was the institution of a new festival of Dionysos—the Greater Dionysia—at which the old choruses representing the satyr attendants of the god, a characteristic feature of the Dionysiac feasts, were encouraged to compete for a stated prize. From so humble a seed grew in time the wonderful flower of Attic drama, with its almost incalculable influence on the subsequent thought and literature of the western world.

Murder and revolution put an end to the Peisistratid dynasty, but at least, like their contemporaries, the Tarquins at Rome, they had set their city a standard and an ideal from which she never afterwards swerved. Under Kleisthenes, the principal leader of the revolution and a brilliant political reformer, a start was made with the building of a new and magnificent house of Athena on the site afterwards occupied by the Parthenon. Incomplete at his death, it was still a mass of scaffolding when in 480 the Persian host, fresh from its slaughter of the Spartan heroes at Thermopylæ, rolled down upon Athens like a destroying wave. To defend the city itself was impossible, since the old walls had been pulled down by order of Peisistratos, but the possibility of holding the Acropolis commended itself to many. It was only by the real or pretended discovery that the sacred serpent had refused its usual offering—implying that the goddess herself had forsaken the citadel—that the majority of the citizens were induced to adopt the advice of Themistokles and take refuge in Salamis, relying for protection solely on their fleet. Even then a small band, trusting to a literal interpretation of the Delphic oracle, which had declared that “a wooden wall” would save Athens, shut themselves up in the Acropolis, barricading the approach with a strong wooden palisade. But the



*By permission of the Hellenic Society.*

## THE PIRÆUS.



Persians succeeded in scaling the hill on the north, near the sanctuary of Aglauros: the defenders were cut down, or flung themselves from the cliff: and the ancient city, with its crown of temples, was reduced to a heap of smouldering ruins.

Like Rome after the Gallic sack of 390 B.C., so Athens, consecrated anew with Persian blood at Salamis and Platæa, now entered upon a period of unprecedented power and prosperity. The old Pelasgic wall of the Acropolis, ruinous and half-buried, was replaced by the splendid ramparts that we now see. Themistokles, though, despite his great services to the state, he was irrevocably banished in 462, completed the section on the north, utilizing—as inspection shows—the broken fragments of the old temples destroyed by the Persians: the remainder are the work of his successor, Kimon, an able statesman and soldier who did much to improve and restore his native city. To Themistokles again was due the building of a strong wall round the city and of the famous Long Walls, parallel to one another, which united Athens with the Piræus: and the story, whether truth or legend, deserves a paragraph to itself.

The final defeat of the Persians at Platæa had left Sparta supreme in Greece as a military power, and having no walls herself she had no desire that other cities should possess them. Her invitation to Athens to attend a conference on the general question of fortifications was perforce accepted: Themistokles himself started as one of the envoys, but instructed his colleagues to stay behind till the wall, on which the entire population was working feverishly night and day, had reached a defensible height. To the Spartans he explained that he could do nothing till the arrival of his colleagues, for whose continual delay he professed himself unable to account. Meanwhile, rumours naturally



reached Sparta of the work in progress at Athens, but Themistokles pooh-poohed the whole story, and invited the Spartans to send envoys to see for themselves. They did so—unaware, however, that he had secretly sent instructions to detain the envoys till the safe return of himself and his colleagues. The latter at length joined him at Sparta with the news that the wall was now strong enough to defend, whereupon Themistokles announced to the outwitted Spartans that Athens was no longer in a position to require Sparta's doubtless well-meant advice.

The tale may be as untrue as it is amusing: but the brilliant part played by Athens in the war had certainly raised her to the front rank among the Greek states, a position which she improved still further by placing herself at the head of a powerful maritime confederacy. This confederacy had been founded ostensibly for defence against future aggression by the Persians: but the Athenian Government soon found excellent reasons for transferring the funds of the league from Delos to Athens, where the money was largely diverted to the vast public works which characterized the administration of Perikles. The rise of the Athenian empire was coincident with a dazzling pre-eminence in art and thought which has made the age of Perikles proverbial. It is superfluous to enlarge on the abnormality of a period which, in less than fifty years, witnessed the histories of Herodotos and Thucydides, the comedies of Aristophanes, the dramas of Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides: the paintings of Polygnotos, the sculptures of Pheidias and Polykleitos, the architectural masterpieces of Mnesikles and Iktinos: the pathological researches of Hippokrates, and the philosophical speculations of Socrates. "Joy was it in that dawn to be alive."

And now once again the Acropolis bristled with scaffold-

ing and re-echoed with the drone of saws and the ring and chink of chisels. Both the old double temple of Athena and Poseidon-Erechtheus and the later temple embellished by Peisistratos had been temporarily restored after the Persian sack, but such makeshifts obviously could not long be tolerated in a city which was daily becoming wealthier and more powerful. The grandiose plans begun under Kleisthenes were revived, and on the completion of the Parthenon the old Hekatompedon was finally pulled down as superfluous. Additional space was thus acquired for the rebuilding of the old temple of the Polias on a larger and more elaborate scale. Just when the new building—the present Erechtheion—was begun is uncertain; perhaps in 432; but it unquestionably was not completed till the last years of the century, when the long war with Sparta was drawing to its disastrous close. Like its venerable predecessor, whose titles of “ancient temple” and “temple of the Polias” were soon transferred to it, it guarded not only the holy “tokens”—olive-tree and salt “sea”—of Athena and Poseidon, but also the sacred serpent, Erichthonios, and the old wooden fetish-image which had been carried off to Salamis for safety during the Persian occupation.

The glory alike of the goddess and of her chosen city was finally attested by the magnificent Propylæa by which access was gained to her holy hill. The temple of Athena Nike, as we shall see, appears to have arisen somewhat later, while a large building, the Chalkotheka, or Armoury, of which only the foundations remain, was erected westward of the Parthenon close to the southern wall of the Acropolis. In the third century B.C. King Attalos of Pergamon, in commemoration of the repulse of a Gaulish invasion, set up a series of groups of statuary on the section of the wall which overlooks the Dionysiac theatre, but of these no

fragment has survived. Of the Roman period there is little save the tall pedestal, as one ascends to the Propylæa, of a statue to M. Vipsanius Agrippa, the great minister and son-in-law of Augustus, and the scanty fragments of a small circular temple of Augustus and Roma, which are to be seen near the east end of the Parthenon. The Acropolis as we see it to-day is thus almost entirely a memorial of the fifth century, and more especially of Perikles and his associates.

## CHAPTER II

### ON THE ACROPOLIS

THE sole entrance to the Acropolis is the gateway, flanked by two low and massy towers, and named after the French archæologist, Beulé, who first revealed its existence below the old Turkish fortifications by which it was then concealed. It is, comparatively speaking, a late work, dating only from about the middle of the first century of our era, and replaces an older gate which probably lay a little lower down the slope. About the same time the earlier winding ascent to the Propylæa was replaced by the monumental stairway of marble, constructed with fragments of earlier monuments, which still partly exists.

A little way within the Beulé gate, against the railings on the right, are some fragments from the architrave, sculptured with doves and fillets, of the temple of Aphrodite Pandemos which stood in the original market-place below the Acropolis. Standing here, let us try to imagine the scene on the occasion of the Panathenaia, the greatest and most famous of all the religious festivals of Athens. It took place in August, and though of annual occurrence, it was celebrated every fourth year with especial pomp and solemnity, the whole of the Athenian people taking part. We must picture the great hypostyles of the Propylæa, the Nike bastion, and indeed every possible vantage-point, as crowded with spectators: women and children, old men too

feeble to endure the fatigue of the procession, and visitors from other Greek or foreign states.

Already the long procession is winding its way up the hill. The sound of chanting rises to our ears: the throbbing of lyres mingles with the shrill wailing of flutes, as the head of the cortège looms into sight beyond the Areopagos, and, gradually ascending the ridge, comes to a temporary halt before the outer gate. First, led by one of the marshals of the procession, comes a numerous band of young girls arrayed in white robes, their natural gaiety subdued by the solemnity of the occasion. Some carry libation bowls, some have wine-jugs, others bear on their heads the *diphroi* for the banquet to which the gods are to be invited. Behind them, grave and bearded, walks a small company of magistrates and older citizens: and, following these at a little distance, the sacrificial animals stumble in a little cloud of dust, the sheep bleating in uncomprehending protest, the white-skinned heifers "lowing to the skies, And all their silken flanks in garlands drest." One cow makes a panic-stricken plunge for freedom, and is restrained with some difficulty by the man and woman who are leading the animal on either side.

Youth carrying on their shoulders trays of little cakes and jars of wine for the libations are followed first by a band of musicians, with lyres and flutes, and then by a crowd of grave and reverend signiors bearing olive-branches. After these come the chariots, whose prancing, rearing steeds, that seem in some danger of trampling on the branch-bearers in front, are energetically warned back by one of the marshals. Beside each long-robed charioteer, who seems to pride himself on his statue-like immobility, is a "Dismounter" (*apobates*)—a warrior whose weighty shield and armour of polished bronze flash like gold in the bright

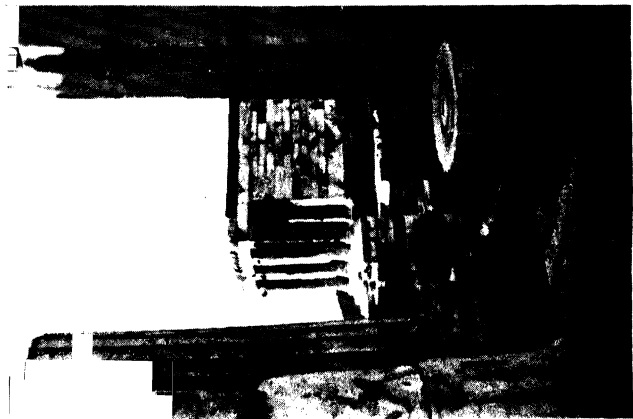
sun as he leaps nimbly from the rolling car and back again. And then, in loose ranks of from five to seven abreast, come the Athenian cavalry, the very flower of youthful manhood; bare-headed, their fiery horses dancing and curveting and tossing their slender, nervous heads; the light breeze ruffling the closely trimmed manes, and fluttering the scarlet cloaks that blow gallantly back from the riders' shoulders.

Last of all, probably, appears a curious car, made in the form of a ship on wheels, from whose mast—like the banner borne on the *carroccio* of some medieval Italian city—hangs the sacred *peplos* of Athena. This garment, which is woven anew every four years, is dyed a deep scarlet, while the hem is embroidered with scenes of warring gods and giants. To-day it is solemnly to be placed upon the primitive *xoanon* of the goddess, the ancient image dedicated to Athena by her foster-son, Erichthonios.

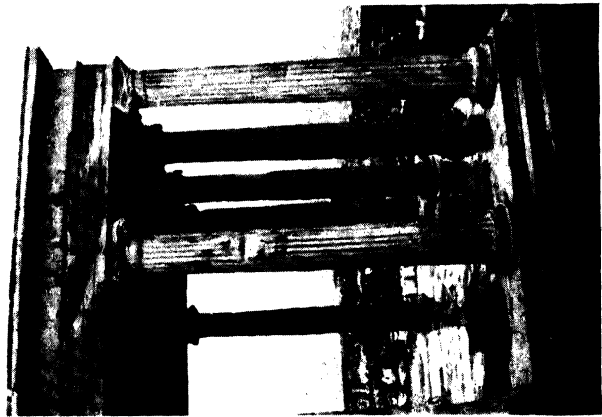
While the procession halts—for the ascent to the Propylæa is too steep for horses and chariots, and the remainder of the way must be traversed on foot—we may examine the lovely little temple of Athena Nike, which is often, though misleadingly, called the temple of the Wingless Victory. Of the Ionic order, it is what is called "amphiprostyle," i.e. with a portico at either end. Pulled down by the Turks to make a battery, it was carefully rebuilt after 1835, when the battery was demolished, only the gabled roof and pediment being missing. Firmly based upon the massive bastion from which it rises so lightly and gracefully, it is as though the unwinged goddess herself stood at the entry to her citadel, to speed her defenders on their way or crown them on their triumphant return. Gazing out between the columns of the western portico over that glorious panorama of sea and plain, of island and mountain-

chain, from the vicinity of Sunion to the dark-blue summits of distant Argolis, one recalls the legend of the aged king, Ægeus, and of Theseus, his son. Before sailing for Crete, bent on encountering and destroying the monstrous Bull-man to whom the youth of Athens was yearly sacrificed, Theseus had promised, if successful, to display a white sail in place of the black hitherto borne by the returning vessel. Unhappily he forgot to do so: and Ægeus, deeming that his son had perished, flung himself in despair from the lofty platform. The artificial levelling of the rock below the southern face of the bastion marks the site of a shrine erected in ancient times on the spot where tradition declared him to have fallen.

Whatever degree of historicity may attach to the legend, the sanctuary of Athena Victory must have existed from a very early period. Originally it was a mere *temenos* or sacred precinct containing an altar and a primitive wooden image of Athena holding the attributes of Victory (*Nike*)—a helmet and a pomegranate—but without the wings with which Nike herself is always endowed. A cow, picked for its beauty, was annually sacrificed to the goddess. The bastion on which the temple stands was already in existence before the building of the Propylæa, with whose axis it was subsequently brought into alignment. The date at which the temple itself was erected has been much discussed. An inscription found on the north slope of the Acropolis, recording a decree for the building of a stone temple and altar of Athena Nike, would seem to assign it to between 460 and 450 B.C., but as the style of the architecture points to a date posterior to the Parthenon and Propylæa, it appears likely that the execution of the decree was delayed owing to political controversies, and eventually revived by Perikles' opponents, who thus com-



ATHENS: TEMPLE OF ATHENA NIKE,  
FROM THE PROPYLEA.



*Photos. by Author.*  
ATHENS: NORTH PORCH OF ERECH-  
THEION, SHOWING OPENING ABOVE  
"COTTAGE" MARKS





pelled Mnesikles, the architect of the Propylæa, to modify his plans.

The Ionic frieze surrounding the temple has been badly damaged, nor is its appearance improved by the terra-cotta casts which replace four slabs now in the British Museum. The subject is the Persian wars. On the east front the gods are shown in council, pronouncing judgment between Europe and Asia: on the other three sides are battle scenes. On the west the Athenians are arrayed against the Thebans, who took the Persian side at Plataea: the north and south sides depict the exploits of the Athenians against the Persians at Marathon and Salamis respectively. It has been pointed out that each scene faces in the direction of the victory it commemorates—the south towards Salamis and the sea, the west towards Mount Kithairon and Plataea, the north towards the pass that leads to the field of Marathon.

The edge of the bastion originally supported a marble parapet, crowned with a bronze railing and carved with a series of reliefs. The remains of these reliefs, now in the Acropolis museum, plainly show the influence of the Parthenon sculptures, and are believed to testify to the relief and exultation felt at Athens in consequence of two successive naval victories over the Spartans in 411–10. It was a time of profound anxiety and depression: the terrible disaster that had overtaken the great expedition against Syracuse was still recent: and the tidings of what for the moment seemed an almost decisive success were all the more wholeheartedly welcomed. The work seems to have been entrusted to several sculptors, whose names are unknown. Chief among them is incontestably the master who executed the exquisite figure of a Victory stooping in the act of flight to fasten her sandal. A pose in itself ungraceful is transformed by the genius of the artist into one of breath-

catching loveliness. The radiating lines of the upper garment, whose clinging softness reveals rather than hides the rounded contours beneath, are resolved and tranquillized by the grave perpendicular folds of the chiton below, as the quiet major chords of the finale compose the rushing harmonies of a symphony.

But see! the procession is on its way once more, and in fact is already passing into the shadow of the superb entrance to the Acropolis erected by Mnesikles in 437-2 B.C. No more imposing gateway than the Propylæa was surely ever planned. As Ghiberti's bronze doors at Florence were adjudged by Michelangelo worthy to be the doors of Paradise, even so the Propylæa might well have served the immortal gods for an entry to Olympus.

As the name implies, the Propylæa are not the gate itself but the imposing colonnades which precede it. The actual entrance, as we see, consists of a lofty central portal, over 24 feet high and nearly 14 feet across, with two smaller gateways on either side; all five once closed by ponderous gates of bronze. In front of these extends the grand western portico, nearly 60 feet wide and 53 feet in depth. Behind the six great Doric columns and architrave that crown the three immense steps by which one ascends to the portico, a double file of slender Ionic columns, originally measuring nearly 34 feet in height, forms an avenue of approach to the central portal. To right and left of the steps and their Doric colonnades wings or *antæ* are flung outwards and forwards. Here for the first time one observes a discrepancy in the plan. The left or northern wing consists of a portico and an inner chamber called the Pinakotheka, or "picture-gallery," from the fact that votive works of art were once suspended on its walls. Undoubtedly it was the intention of Mnesikles to construct his southern

wing on the same plan, and indeed his original designs seem to have been far from ending even there. Circumstances, however, ordered otherwise. A southern wing of the same area as the other must inevitably have encroached on the precincts both of the Brauronian Artemis and of Athena Nike: and the hostility of the priests, backed by the die-hards in religious matters and allied with the political opponents of Mnesikles' patron, Perikles, forbade the great architect to complete his grandiose plans. The southern wing, in fact, with its open colonnade and limited area, remains a striking example of what religious prejudice and political jealousy were capable of effecting even in the golden age of Periklean Athens.

All this time the Panathenaic procession, bearing the holy *peplos* reverently in its midst as a Catholic procession might bear some relic of the Virgin Mary, is moving slowly up the rock-cut roadway, now hardly distinguishable, that leads towards the centre of the hill. Surveying the rugged and barren slope of limestone, strewn with shattered fragments of marble, that now extends from the Propylæa to the Parthenon, one has difficulty in realizing the scene that once presented itself on emerging from the eastern portico of the great entrance—the bewildering array of shrines and statues in marble and bronze bordering the way on either side, the towering splendour of the great Parthenon, the unmatched elegance of the Erechtheion: both temples not merely new and intact, but like the majority of ancient Greek buildings, blazing with the most brilliant and varied colour. Of the innumerable statues that crowded the surface of the hill in the time of Pausanias the most curious was perhaps a bronze statue of Zeus before which an ox was annually sacrificed. The sacrifice completed, a trial was immediately held to discover the animal's murderer.

Each man in succession professed himself guiltless, until finally the axe and knife were found guilty and solemnly condemned. This singular ceremony was evidently a survival from primitive times, when the bull was regarded as the incarnation of the divine life-force, yearly slain and yearly incarnated afresh in a young and vigorous body.

Already the head of the procession has passed to the right of the great bronze statue of Athena the Champion (*Promachos*), constructed by Pheidias from the spoils of Marathon. Including the pedestal it was about 30 feet high—the Virgin Goddess in armoured tunic and crested helm, the awful ægis with the Gorgoneion upon her breast, and her right hand clasped about the shaft of her long lance, whose gilded point, glittering in the sun, was visible from far out at sea. Constantine the Great, it is believed, removed the statue to his new capital on the Bosphorus, where it remained to adorn his Forum for nearly eight centuries. In 1203, however, the ancient city was stormed and sacked by the savages of the Fourth Crusade: and the statue, whose face, says the Byzantine historian, Niketas Choniata, irradiated an expression of love and longing, was smashed to fragments by the rabble of Constantinople in the belief that the goddess had maliciously summoned the invaders with her outstretched hand.

Meanwhile the procession, as we still see it eternalized in the wonderful frieze, is flowing steadily along the north side of the Parthenon towards the great altar of Athena, whose position can still be traced in the rock at the north-east corner of the temple. There the hecatomb of victims is to be offered, and prayer solemnly made for Athens and her people. The most important part of the day's proceedings, the actual investiture of the goddess with her new robe, was of course carried out in strict seclusion in

the Erechtheion; that is to say, in the shrine of Athena which occupied the eastern half of the building. No doubt the name of Erechtheion, or "house of Erechtheus," was originally restricted to the western half, containing the actual shrine of Poseidon-Erechtheus.

At the first glance it is clear that the Erechtheion—one of the most perfect examples of fifth-century Greek architecture—bears no resemblance to any other known Greek temple. From the exterior, in fact, it suggests rather a small but graceful palace: and, as we have seen, a palace—at least in origin—it most probably was. The lovely little Porch of the Maidens, whose graceful figures, basket on head, seem to represent the youthful "basket-bearers" of the Panathenaic procession, appears to have had no means of access from without, and was therefore most probably intended for the sole use of the temple ministrants. The entrances for public worship, two in number, were on the north and east. The Ionic east portico, with its elaborate capitals and richly sculptured architrave, gave admission to the sanctuary of the Polias where dwelt the prehistoric wooden image for which the *peplos* was woven. Apparently a mere olive-trunk roughly hewn into the semblance of a seated human figure, it had perhaps begun life not as an Athena at all, but as some other and earlier goddess. This was the image which Orestes, when he shall have fled for sanctuary to Athens, is bidden by the Dioskouroi to embrace: "for She will keep back the Furies . . . that they touch thee not, and will hold above thy head the round shield with the Gorgon's face."<sup>1</sup> As the sacred Stone of the Great Mother at Rome was washed each year in the brook Almo, it was annually escorted by the Athenian youth to be solemnly bathed on the shore of Phaleron: and once a

<sup>1</sup> Eur., *Electra*.

year, all approaches to the temple having been barred, the image was stripped and muffled in cloths, and its robes, including the *peplos*, subjected to a ceremonial washing.

In front of the image there burned perpetually a golden lamp, made by the celebrated metal-worker, Kallimachos, with a chimney in the shape of a palm-tree. The wick was of asbestos, and the lamp itself so constructed as to require filling but once a year. Tended by venerable widows, it was extinguished only during the siege of Athens by Sulla, when there was no oil with which to replenish it. Here too were preserved several interesting relics of the Persian wars, including a golden cuirass, a sword which had belonged to the Persian general Mardonios, and a folding-chair of wonderful workmanship.

From the eastern cella to the western there seems to have been no direct access. Apparently the usual entrance to the west end of the building was by the beautiful northern doorway, which, though restored in Roman times, is still the finest architectural model that the classical world has left to us. The six Ionic columns of the porch support a coffered ceiling—now chiefly a restoration—which appears to have been originally decorated with gilt bronze stars or bosses. Below the marble floor is a small crypt: and here, adjoined by a small cistern—probably Turkish—an opening purposely left in the pavement still allows us, as of old, to behold the three irregular holes in the rock which were pointed out as the marks of Poseidon's trident. A similar opening was left in the roof immediately above—an arrangement with which one may compare the opening in the roof of the temple of Deus Fidius at Rome, and the opening left above the altar of Terminus in the temple of the Capitoline Triad. The mysterious associations of the spot, however, probably go back to times that as yet knew naught

of Poseidon. It has been plausibly suggested that here we have the chasm where the old lightning-god Erechtheus had plunged into the earth—a sacred spot like the Roman *putealia*: while Professor Cook<sup>1</sup> conjectures that the holes are neolithic “cup-marks,” which would point to the Acropolis as the home of cult, in one form or another, from the days of the later Stone Age.

Beyond the doorway the worshipper entered a kind of hall—flanked on the left by the western cella—whose walls were adorned with paintings. Beneath the floor of the hall lay a crypt containing the famous “sea” of Poseidon, which was said to give forth the sound of waves when the wind was in the south: a well-head apparently connected the cistern with the hall above, which contained altars of Poseidon, Erechtheus and Hephaistos. It was not, probably, in this, but in the smaller crypt below the porch that the sacred serpent Erichthonios had his lair. The conception of the snake as a kind of good genius of the house is one thoroughly familiar even to-day with the peasantry of the eastern Mediterranean, and Sir Arthur Evans declares that he has himself known peasant households in what is now Jugo-Slavia where the snake was fed with milk and treated as a domestic pet.

The curiously irregular plan of the Erechtheion has always impressed observers, and Professor Dörpfeld believes that the original intention—for some reason never carried out—was to complete the building by a western half similar to the eastern. The temple would thus have possessed a cella and portico at each end, while the central portion would have consisted of three compartments with a large decorative porch on the north and a small one on the south. The present west façade probably received its actual appear-

<sup>1</sup> *Zeus*, II, i, 792.



ance, with its half-columns and windows, in Roman times: originally it seems to have been composed of four Ionic columns standing on a low wall, the southernmost intercolumniation being left open, while the remainder were built up with a parapet and a wooden screen.

The triangular enclosure on the west of the Erechtheion was the Pandroseion, or sanctuary of Pandrosos. It was approached, not only by the side doorway in the north porch, but also by the door which is still to be seen in the west façade, and which, since it was left without decoration of any kind, was evidently not intended for public use. In later times it formed the entrance to the church into which the Erechtheion had been converted: by no means its strangest metamorphosis, for under the Turkish rule the building was turned into a harem.

The Pandroseion, which was probably enclosed by a portico on the north-west, was the abode and playground (*sphairisterion*) of the youthful handmaidens of Athena, two of whom had the sacred duty of weaving the first threads of her holy robe. They were officially known as "Arrephoroi," or "Bearers of that which must not be spoken," since one of their duties during the Panathenaia—which lasted for three days—was to carry secretly and by night certain mysterious objects to the shrine of Aphrodite-in-the-Gardens. Here too was the legendary tomb and shrine of Kekrops, which almost certainly occupied the gap beneath the huge limestone monolith which in the south-west corner projects below the Porch of the Maidens. A small olive-tree commemorates to-day the sacred tree brought forth at Athena's bidding, which had miraculously sprouted afresh after its destruction by the Persians. Beside it stood an ancient altar of Zeus: and we learn from Dionysius of Halicarnassus that a bitch on one occasion jumped upon

the altar and went to sleep. Dogs—probably from their chthonic associations—were strictly excluded from any part of the Acropolis, and this trivial-seeming incident evoked the direst forebodings.

And now, the solemn investiture of the *xoanon* being completed, and the sacrifices at an end, the multitude assembles before the eastern front—that is to say, the principal entrance—of the Parthenon, where the day's proceedings are to terminate by adoration of the goddess in the greatest and most glorious of her various houses upon the hill. Something of the spirit inspiring this solemn prayer by the entire people of Attica may be gathered from the beautiful invocation uttered by the chorus in Euripides' drama, *The Herakleidae*. "O Lady"—such are the words—"Thine is the soil of our land, Thine is the city, whereof Thou art Mother, Mistress and Guardian: for rich service of sacrifice is ever fulfilled for Thee, nor do the last days of the waning moon pass by in silence, nor are the songs of the young and the choral strains unheard, and on the windy hilltop the maidens' voices ring out in holy acclaim, while all night long the ground is beaten by their dancing feet."

Standing on the highest point of the Acropolis, the Parthenon was probably begun in 447 B.C., and was dedicated—though probably not entirely finished—in 438-7. The architect, a master of supreme genius, was Iktinos, while the general supervision of the work was given to Pheidias, perhaps the greatest sculptor of any age, who not only designed but himself helped to carve the statues and reliefs adorning the building.<sup>1</sup> For beauty of design, perfection of form and harmony of proportion the ancient world

<sup>1</sup> *Pace* Professor H. Schrader, who believes that Pheidias had very little to do with either the design or the execution of the sculptures.

probably never succeeded in surpassing, or even equalling, the Parthenon. Even in its present roofless and mutilated condition it is still not difficult to understand the verdict of Plutarch when speaking in general of the great works achieved during the Periklean administration. "There is," he wrote, "a kind of freshness that seems to bloom upon them, which guards their beauty from the touch of time, as though they were endowed with the breath of life, and with a soul that grows not old for ever."

The great temple was erected on the already existing platform of the temple begun under Kleisthenes, which however was to have been longer and narrower than the existing building. From end to end of the stylobate the Parthenon measures exactly 228 feet 2 inches, with a breadth of 101 feet 4 inches. The forty-six Doric columns of the peristyle are slightly under 35 feet in height, nearly 8 feet apart, and—with the exception of the corner columns, which are slightly more massive—have a base diameter of just under 7 feet. They incline, especially the corner columns, somewhat inwards towards the cella, or *naos*: the entasis, i.e. the slight thickening towards the middle to correct the illusory appearance of attenuation presented by columns that are perfectly even, attains a maximum of .057 at a height of two-fifths of the column. For similar reasons, the lines of the foundations are never perfectly horizontal, but rise perceptibly in the middle to an extent varying from three to four inches.

There is not a single straight line of any great length, writes Professor D'Ooge, nor a single vertical surface exactly plumb in the entire building. The cella wall batters inward, as do also the architrave and triglyph frieze, while the cornice and the antefix lean outward. A similar departure from a straight line is seen in the lines of the oblique cornices of the gables, which are gently deflected towards the corners

so as to be concave, thus producing an effect of rest and quiet. These delicate deviations from hard and fast mathematical lines, often hardly noticeable even to the trained eye, produce in their totality an impression of elasticity and rhythm which every beholder feels. . . . The secret of Nature which knows no rigid mathematical lines has been overheard by Pheidias and Iktinos, and applied in the gentle curves of the lines of the architecture.

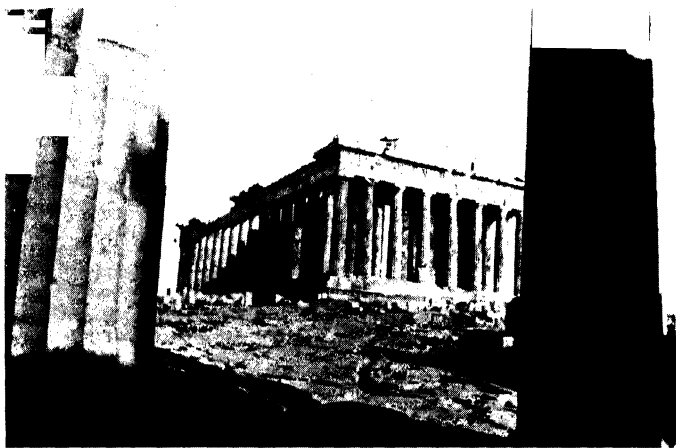
The eastern pediment, Pausanias informs us, was occupied by a group representing the birth of Athena, who was said to have sprung, fully armed in golden mail, from the head of Zeus. "Quickly did the goddess leap from the immortal head"—so runs the Homeric Hymn to Athena—"and stood before Zeus shaking her sharp spear, and high Olympos trembled in dread beneath the strength of the grey-eyed Maiden, while Earth rang terribly around, and the sea boiled with dark waves, and suddenly brake forth the foam." The central part of the composition, which probably contained the figures of Zeus seated on his throne and of Athena standing before him, has perished—most probably during the conversion of the Parthenon into a Byzantine church with an apse at the east end: and the remaining figures, now in the British Museum, are too mutilated to identify with certainty except those of Helios and Selene—the deities of the sun and moon—in the angles. Helios drives his chariot, while Selene was probably seated sideways upon her steed. The superb male figure reclining on the left—the so-called Theseus—is probably a personification of Mount Olympos: and next to him are seated two female figures who are probably the two Horæ,<sup>1</sup> the guardians of Heaven's gates, "whether to throw open the thick cloud or make it fast."

<sup>1</sup> It has also been suggested that these two figures are Demeter and her daughter Persephone: partly from their affectionate attitude, and partly from the two chests—a frequent attribute of the two goddesses—on which they are seated.

At this moment the cloudy portals are flung wide, and from them speeds forth Iris, the messenger of the gods, bearing the wondrous tidings to mortals. Of the three beautiful female figures on the other side of the gable one can only be confident that they are not, as they are usually called, the Three Fates. With much plausibility the two conjoined figures, one sitting firmly upright, the other reclining in her lap, have been thought to represent Gaia and Thalassa, Earth and Sea: while Hestia, the hearth goddess, symbolical of Olympus as the true home of the gods, has been suggested for the third figure.

The sculptures of the western pediment, which represented the contest between Athena and Poseidon, were mostly still in fairly good preservation in the seventeenth century, when they were copied by an unknown artist in the train of the Marquis de Nointel. Unfortunately, on the capture of the Acropolis by the Venetians a few years later, an attempt was made to carry off the principal figures to Venice, with the result that the tackle gave way, and the group was shattered in fragments on the ground. The two rival deities, closely facing each other, each with a foot firmly planted on the contended site, were shown starting furiously apart. Between them, it would seem, stood the olive-tree of Athena, while behind Poseidon was probably the salt "sea," with a dolphin (seen and sketched by de Nointel's artist) below the sea-god's chariot.

In the angles to left and right are reclining river-gods—perhaps the Ilissos, with the nymph Kallirhoe beside him, and the Eridanos, which flowed respectively north and south of the Acropolis. Next to the Eridanos comes Kekrops, with his serpent tail, and Pandrosos, who clings to her father in alarm: the two other daughters, Herse and Agraulos, with Erichthonios between them, originally filled the now



ATHENS: THE PARTHENON FROM THE PROPYLAEA.



*Photos, by Author*

ATHENS: INTERIOR OF PARTHENON (EAST).



empty space on the right. Behind Athena was her chariot, driven by Nike: the chariot of Poseidon, probably driven by his wife, Amphitrite, occupied the corresponding position on the other side. The chariot-wheels, as well as many other accessories, were doubtless added in bronze. On each side, next to the terrified horses, are figures which are usually identified as Hermes and Iris, while remains of what were possibly marine deities are seen behind the gap representing Poseidon's chariot. It must be emphasized that these identifications are by no means final. Professor W. R. Lethaby<sup>1</sup> believes, for example, that the supposed Eridanos, with the figure which originally must have occupied the gap on the right, were early Attic rulers like Kekrops, and that the supposed Ilissos and Kallirhoe are really Cephalos and Procris—"probably the most popular persons of Athenian story."

Of the *metopes*, which are mostly of minor artistic interest, many are still in their original position on the exterior of the peristyle. Better preserved, and in many ways the most interesting of all the Parthenon sculptures, is the long frieze that, extending round the outside of the *naos*, depicts the Panathenaic procession. Though the greater number of these wonderful reliefs were removed to England by Lord Elgin, those on the west of the temple are mostly still in place, while twenty-two slabs are in the Acropolis museum.

No one who has studied this marvellous work, whether in the pallid twilight of the British Museum, or under the azure skies of Athens, can ever forget the long cavalcade of glorious young men, who ride as though joyously aware that they can never bid the spring adieu—a vision of youthful pride and grace, darkened, one feels, by no shadow of time

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, L, i, 1930.



or mortality. All these reliefs were once, of course, brilliantly coloured: and it must further be borne in mind that, with the gradual disappearance of the colouring, we have lost likewise the painted background and many of the accessory details. Gone too are the bits and bridles of the horses, the wreaths worn by the riders, the staffs carried by the marshals of the procession, all of which were of bronze, and possibly gilded. Add to all this the dazzling polychromy of the entire building, a blaze of vivid blues and reds, the golden oil-jars on the corners, the palmette acroteria crowning the gables, and—in the fourth century—the magnificent bronze shields which Alexander caused to be suspended on the architrave after his victory at the Granikos: and one begins to form some conception of the sheer gorgeousness that must once have glowed and glittered there in the brilliant Athenian sunshine.

Round three sides of the sanctuary moved the long sculptured train, weaving thus, as it were, a perpetual circle about the building to protect it from all evil influences. The strongest protection of all, naturally, was reserved for the principal entrance, at the east end. Here, as he looked up, the entering worshipper beheld, along with the ritual apotheosis of Athens' "king" and "queen,"<sup>1</sup> the high gods themselves, who, as graciously deigning to accept the city's invitation to bless the festival with their presence, sat in familiar ease, grouped on either side of the sacred robe, and indulging in a sort of "sacra conversazione," like saints in some old Italian picture. On the one side the throne of honour was occupied by Zeus, on the other by Athena: for surely here, in her own house and her own city, the Virgin Goddess was Mistress, equal in majesty and power to the King of the gods himself.

<sup>1</sup> *V. supra*, p. 25.

Little doubt of her might, certainly, can have entered the mind of her worshippers when they passed from the pronaos in through the vast double doorway, surmounted by a latticed transom, whose valves were charged with apotropaic symbols, such as lions' heads and gorgoneia. Two more great doors, of bronze lattice-work, lay within the first, and gave admission to the twilight shrine, 100 Attic feet (98 ft. 10 in.) in length, whose coffered wooden ceiling was supported by a double file of Doric columns. Here stood the mighty image by Pheidias, which was approximately 40 feet in height. The face and such parts of the limbs and figure as were left uncovered were of ivory: the eyes are stated to have been of precious stones, while the garments and armour of the goddess were wrought in gold. Upright she stood, in triple-crested helm, the Medusa's head and the ægis with its dread fringe of hissing snakes upon her breast, and the serpent Erichthonios coiled with uplifted head at her side. Upon her outstretched right hand a winged Victory, 6 feet high, upheld a wreath, turning at the same time half towards the goddess as though in act of offering. Her left hand supported her mighty spear and cunningly wrought shield, whose reliefs, representing the warfare of Greeks and Amazons, were a miracle of the toreutic art. The best existing copies of the statue are two statuettes found in Athens: the one, which is unfinished, is known as the Lenormant statuette, the other is called after the Varvakeion, where it was discovered. Both are in the National Museum at Athens. Of the reliefs on the shield a more accurate idea is conveyed by the marble Strangford shield, as it is called, in the British Museum. Among the figures upon it one observes a warrior fighting an Amazon, his face half-concealed by his uplifted arm, and a bald old man swinging a double axe. These are

doubtless copies of the figures referred to by Plutarch, who says that Pheidias introduced into the design portraits of himself and Perikles: a statement for which he probably had no more serious authority than the fertile imagination of Athenian *ciceroni*.

The cella of the Parthenon was divided into two parts by a transverse wall without openings: the eastern chamber (*hekatompedos naos*), containing the great statue, and the western chamber, which was accessible only from the opisthodomos, and had a panelled ceiling, perhaps of marble, upborne by four Ionic columns. It was called the *parthenōn*, or chamber of the maidens, a term applied to the most secluded portion of the women's apartments of a Greek house: probably because it was used as a treasury, especially for the funds of the Delian confederacy, as the women's apartments were used for the safe keeping of valuables.<sup>1</sup> Naturally enough, the name was soon extended to the entire dwelling of the Parthenos, or Maiden Goddess, while the actual *parthenōn* was often laxly referred to as the opisthodomos, the part of a temple which usually served as a treasury.

For nearly eight hundred years the glorious image commanded the awe and veneration of all beholders. After the closing of all pagan temples by imperial edict at the end of the fourth century of our era, it lingered on amid the lonely shadows of its forsaken shrine until destroyed by fire—so it is believed—at some time after the year A.D. 429. The Parthenon itself was converted in the same century into the cathedral church of Athens, and dedicated to the Panagia (the Virgin Mary), but up to the year 1460, when it became a Turkish mosque, it does not seem to have

<sup>1</sup> For the *parthenōn* and its use as a treasury see D'Ooge, *The Acropolis of Athens*, 136–9, and Appendix III.

undergone any irreparable injury beyond the destruction of the central figures in the east pediment. From that time onwards, however, it undoubtedly suffered heavily, especially as regards the sculptures, the remainder of which were already badly mutilated in 1674, when de Nointel's artist made his drawings of them. Yet at least the structure as a whole was substantially intact when in 1687 a Venetian army captured Athens and besieged the Turkish garrison on the Acropolis. Knowing that the Turks had stored their powder in the Parthenon, the besiegers took careful aim, and, with a single bomb, at once compelled the surrender of the citadel, and destroyed for ever the historic masterpiece which eighteen centuries had spared.

## CHAPTER III

### EAST AND SOUTH OF THE ACROPOLIS

CONSPICUOUS alike from the Acropolis itself and from the wide modern boulevard that rounds it on the south-east are the striking remains of the temple of Olympian Zeus, which in their own way are as impressive as anything in Athens. They consist of fifteen huge columns—all that remain of the original hundred and four—nearly 57 feet high, and over 5 feet in diameter. The stones composing the architrave are proportionately large, one of them weighing about 23 tons. Massive walls and buttresses still sustain the broad artificial platform on which the temple stood. Historically speaking, the foundation of the Olympieion dates from the time of Peisistratos: but it is probable that a shrine of Zeus, or rather of a local deity later identified with Zeus, had existed on the spot from prehistoric times. Legend, in fact, claimed the site as that on which Deukalion, the Greek Noah, had founded a temple to mark where the last waters of the deluge had sunk into the ground, and the very opening down which they had vanished was pointed out. Not improbably this opening is to be recognized in one of the deep vaults, connected with the spring Kallirrhoe by a subterranean passage, which still exist below the temple.

The temple of Peisistratos was, of course, Doric in style, and planned on so huge a scale that for centuries the Athenians lacked the courage or the resources to carry it to completion. Antiochos IV of Syria tackled the task in

174 B.C., but even at his death the building was still unfinished, and remained so till more than six hundred years after its original foundation, when Hadrian, with the resources of the whole Roman Empire behind him, erected what was practically a new temple altogether. The Corinthian order was substituted for the Doric, an innovation for which, however, Antiochos was probably responsible. The quality of the carving on the capitals is certainly superior to that of any other Hadrianic work in Athens, and it would seem therefore that Hadrian's builders simply utilized the capitals which Antiochos had left them.

Pausanias tells us that the temple contained a chryselephantine image of Zeus—the largest in the world except the Colossus of Rhodes and the monstrous bronze effigies at Rome. Similarly the temple itself was exceeded in size only by those of Selinos and Ephesus. Behind it was a statue of Hadrian, likewise of colossal proportions, while a host of smaller statues of their imperial benefactor, contributed by nearly every city in Greece, almost conveyed an impression that not Zeus but Hadrian was the real divinity of the spot. The Greeks of Pausanias' day, proud to call themselves members of the empire, must have regarded with somewhat mixed feelings a statue of Isokrates which also stood in the peribolos—Isokrates, the patriot and statesman who, on learning the tidings of Chaeronea, had killed himself rather than survive the downfall of Hellenic freedom.

The building of the Olympieion coincided with the laying out of an entirely new quarter on this side of the city, the beginning of which is still shown by a sort of triumphal arch which now faces the modern boulevard. This feeble affair, designed in the somewhat baroque style which characterizes the renaissance of Roman art and architecture under

the Antonines, was probably the work of some loyal admirer of the emperor. "This is the city of Hadrian and not of Theseus," runs the inscription facing the Olympieion: on the opposite side are the words, "This is Athens, the former city of Theseus." Various other remains of the Roman period have been unearthed in the vicinity. In the gardens of what was formerly the Royal palace some elaborate pavements of mosaic probably belonged to a *therma*, and the foundations of a small early Christian church have been uncovered close to the Olympieion.

A little to the south of the great temple platform the ancient spring, which has borne the name of Kallirrhoe since the days of Peisistratos, still trickles from its rocky cleft into the bed of the Ilissos. Nowadays, unfortunately, the vicinity is far from suggesting the charming picture drawn by Plato in the *Phaedrus*, where Socrates and his companion stretch themselves on the grassy bank in the murmuring shade of the trees, while the scent of the blossoms unites its charm to the shrill song of the grasshoppers. Socrates' own house, where he dwelt with his Xanthippe, was not far off: and near by too was the district known as "the Gardens," with its sanctuary of Aphrodite, whose cult image by Alkamenes, declares Pausanias, was one of the most beautiful of all the countless works of art in Athens. According to some authorities, the so-called statues of Venus Genetrix in various museums, which represent the goddess with one breast bare, and a transparent, closely clinging garment revealing every line of the young and lovely body beneath, are really copies of this celebrated work.

Opinions differ as to the exact site of a famous sanctuary of Herakles called Kynosarges, where the wits of the fourth century had a kind of club. The precinct of the sanctuary served also as a gymnasium, where the Cynic philosopher,

Antisthenes, held his school. His contemporaries nicknamed him "the Dog" (*kyōn*): and it is still a moot point whether the Cynic (*kynikos*) school of philosophy derived its title from the nickname or the place. When Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander, attacked Athens in 200 B.C. he made Kynosarges his headquarters, and on his failure to capture the city burned the whole place to the ground. Some believe it to have been situated near the modern Zappeion, others in the region of the modern cemetery south of the Olympieion: and the mention of the cemetery recalls a humble funeral which once passed me on its way thither. It consisted of a single antiquated brougham, incredibly rusty and rattle-trap, with a priest and three mourners inside. On the box-seat perched the undertaker and the driver, with their feet on the coffin, while an appropriately skeleton-like steed hustled the party towards the cemetery at a broken-winded trot.

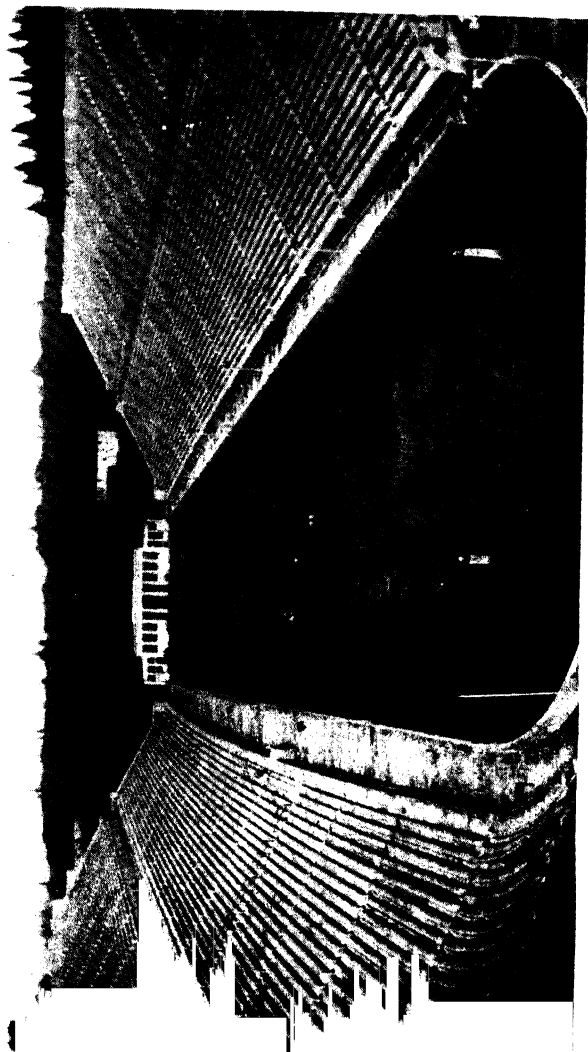
The great Stadium, once the scene of the Panathenaic games, was originally constructed in the fourth century by Lykourgos, who controlled the finances and public works of Athens from 338 to 326 B.C. About A.D. 140 the munificent millionaire, Herodes Atticus, who had been crowned victor in the Panathenaic festival, transformed it out of gratitude into a dazzling structure of Pentelic marble—very much, in fact, as one sees it to-day, restored at enormous cost by a wealthy Greek of Alexandria. As in ancient times, there is accommodation for about 50,000 spectators. Four of the ancient goal-posts, consisting of double *hermæ*, were discovered during the restorations: two have been set up in their original places at the south-east end, while the other two are in the National Museum. To the left of the curved end is a curious tunnel, carved out of the rocky hill, which may have served for the entry of the competitors.



In the last century, when trailing weeds and mosses had rendered it almost indistinguishable from a natural cavern, it was a favourite resort of maidens weary of their single state, who were in the habit of depositing offerings of cakes and honey on a sort of altar in the belief that they might thus propitiate the unkindly Fates.

Facing the triumphal arch near the Olympieion a little street leads past the scanty remains of an Ionic colonnade to a graceful little monument erected—as its half-effaced inscription proclaims—by a certain Lysikrates, who in 335 B.C. had headed the winning chorus at the Dionysiac festival. Originally surmounted by the bronze tripod forming the prize, it is the sole survivor of a whole street of similar monuments, known as the Street of Tripods, which led up to the theatre of Dionysos. Our knowledge of these monuments is practically confined to their mention by Pausanias, who, with a brevity exceeding Baedeker's, merely remarks that one of them included the famous Faun which Praxiteles regarded as one of his two finest works. There is a pleasant tale to the effect that he promised Phryne to present her with his best statue, but cunningly evaded her attempts to find out which he considered as such. One day a slave, acting on her instructions, burst into the room, crying, "Master! your studio is on fire!" "I am lost if my Eros or my Faun is destroyed!" exclaimed the sculptor, rushing to the door—only to be recalled by Phryne's delighted laughter. There was, of course, no fire, but she now knew what she wanted to know.

The monument of Lysikrates was incorporated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in a convent of Capuchins, where Byron resided in 1810, instructing the youthful monks in the noble art of self-defence, and evading the matrimonial demands of Mme Makri, widow of the British vice-consul, to whose daughter Teresa he had addressed



*Photo. by Author.*

ATHENS: THE STADIUM.



the poem "Maid of Athens, ere we part." Modern criticism is unanimous in its praise of the little temple-like building, with its slender Corinthian columns, its band of delicate reliefs below the cornice, and its boldly carved acroterion representing an acanthus flower. Above—or possibly astride—of this stood the tripod, no doubt resembling those which are carved in low relief between the capitals. To judge by the reliefs, the chorus had elected to sing one of the Homeric Hymns, describing how the young Dionysos avenged himself on some pirates who had robbed him by changing them into dolphins. Some of the robbers are being soundly beaten by the satyr-attendants of the god, while others, already in the throes of their fishy transformation, plunge madly into the waves.

"*Brek-kek-kek-kex, koax koax!*" sings the Frog Chorus in Aristophanes' famous comedy. The Greek verb "*brechein*" means "to rain," and as it chanced to be a wet afternoon in midsummer when I first found myself in the theatre of Dionysos below the southern cliffs of the Acropolis, I instinctively listened, though in vain, for the voices of the "brood of the mere and the spring." Standing in the orchestra and surveying the tiers of seats that extend in a half-circle up the rocky slope of the hill, one is apt to think that one beholds the actual theatre in which took place the first performances, not only of the comedies of Aristophanes, but of the tragedies of Aeschylus, of Sophocles, of Euripides. The truth is, however, that the present theatre, though it occupies the same site as its predecessor—which was constructed between 500 and 497 B.C.—dates only from the administration of Lykourgos, when the golden age of Attic drama was already long over. The early theatre presented important differences in several respects. Originally, in all probability, a threshing floor, the orchestra was paved only with pounded earth: in the centre stood an altar of Dionysos,

called the *thymele*, or "place of offering": stage there was none. Even in the time of Lykourgos the stage was represented only by a large rectangular hall, in front of which the action took place. Scenery of wood and canvas, removed after the performance, was erected between the wings, the hall itself serving both as a dressing-room and to store the scenery. No true stage, in the sense of a raised platform, seems to have existed before the Roman period, and the actors simply stood on the steps of the *thymele* whenever they felt the need for a more commanding position.

The stage we see to-day is a clumsy reconstruction carried out in the third century of our era by an archon named Phaidros, who had recorded his activities in an inscription still existing at the top of the steps leading from the orchestra. The series of sculptured panels, however, with the exception of the crouching figures of Sileni,<sup>1</sup> which are earlier, are good work of the first century A.D., dating from a restoration in the reign of Nero. Whether, as has been suggested,<sup>2</sup> they once decorated the *thymele* or not, they are certainly not in their original position, and indeed have been adapted to their present place by the Procrustean method of cutting away the upper portion of the frieze, including the heads of the figures.

The subjects of these panels, as might be expected, are drawn from the story of Dionysos. The first on the left shows the birth of the god. Zeus, seated on his throne, extends his right arm towards Hermes, who holds the infant deity in his arms, while on either side stand the youthful attendants and companions of Zeus, the Kouretes, who, according to Clement of Alexandria, danced likewise round the new-born Dionysos. Next comes the reception of

<sup>1</sup> Only one of these is now in its original position.

<sup>2</sup> J. N. Svoronos, *Ath. Nationalmus.*

Dionysos into Attica by King Ikarios, who, attended by his faithful hound, Maira, is in the act of sacrificing, while behind him his daughter Erigone approaches with offerings. Behind the altar stands Dionysos, with an attendant satyr. In the following panel we see the marriage of Dionysos with the Basilinna,<sup>1</sup> who stands on the left, drawing her bridal veil forward with her left hand, while Tyche (Fortune)—“that late successor of the old-world mother-goddess”—grasps her cornucopia on the right. Beside the Basilinna are traces of a fourth figure—probably Eros—which has been carefully cut away. Beyond the gap once occupied by another figure of Silenus is the fourth and last panel. Here the new god, like Zeus whose younger counterpart he is, sits on a splendid throne in his own theatre: behind him, just as they appear to anyone standing in the theatre to-day, the columns of the Parthenon crown the Acropolis cliff. His bride stands before him, holding out what was perhaps a wreath. On the left is once more Tyche, with her horn of plenty, and in the centre of the panel is the sturdy hero Theseus, grasping his club, the personification of all the traditional virtues of old Attica.

The pavement of the orchestra is also of Roman date. It is decorated with a *swastika* design: a survival, probably, from the magico-religious dances of primitive times, which, by their labyrinthine circlings and twistings, take us back to prehistoric Knossos and the dancing-ground wrought by Daidalos for Ariadne.<sup>2</sup> Under the Empire the theatre was actually employed for gladiatorial exhibitions. The very seats of the priests, Dio Chrysostom tells us, were not infrequently splashed with human blood, and it has even

<sup>1</sup> See p. 67. The interpretation of these two last panels is that of Professor A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, I, i, 708–11.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 221.

been suggested that the marble parapet enclosing the orchestra was set up for the express purpose of protecting the spectators from having the combatants slaughtered in their very laps.

Such hideous scenes—a far cry indeed from the noble verse of the great dramatists whose statues in marble and bronze still adorned the auditorium—reveal as few things could do the immeasurable decline that Greek taste and manners must have suffered since the great days of the Periklean age. Even then, however, the theatre was annually the scene of public cock-fights, a brutal custom which had been in vogue since the Persian wars. The incongruity is all the stranger since the Greek theatre had a definitely religious origin and dedication. Hence the reservation at Athens of the principal seat for the priest of Dionysos. The importance of this seat is shown not only by its central position in the front rank, but by the fact that it alone was sheltered during the performances by a baldachin or awning, the holes for the uprights being still visible in the pavement. It is still further distinguished by beautiful designs in low relief. On the front, Arimaspians, a mythical one-eyed folk dwelling in the far north of Europe, are fighting with griffins for the treasures which the griffins were supposed to guard: on the back, satyrs are carrying great bunches of grapes: and—most beautiful of all—the arms are adorned with figures of kneeling love-gods, with wonderful sweeping wings, holding game-cocks in their hands.

The massive plinth behind the priest's chair was probably intended to support the imperial throne of Hadrian, by whom the theatre had been restored. Another throne was reserved for the monarchs of Pergamon, who did so much to embellish the city, and the names of other important persons are still to be read, engraved on the marble chairs allotted to them. The stone benches in the succeeding rows—which formerly

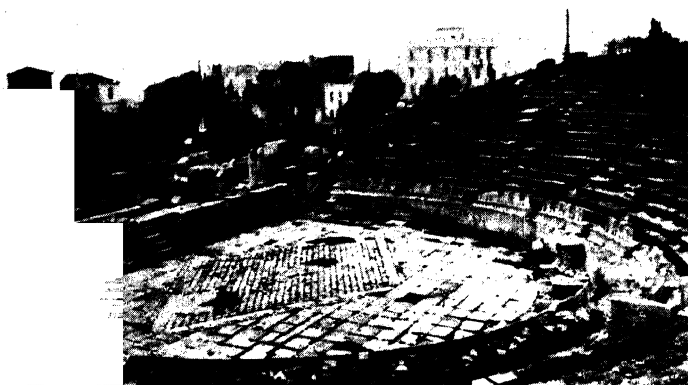
extended to the summit of the slope—have been carefully constructed so that the feet of the occupant should not incommode the spectator in front of him. Most people, naturally, brought cushions with them to mitigate the hardness of the seats. About 17,000 persons could be accommodated, the average fee of admission to the theatre being two obols, i.e. about fourpence: no exorbitant sum for the privilege of listening to some of the greatest dramatic poetry of all time.

Except at a tragedy, the audience was composed almost exclusively of men, for the ithyphallic temperament of most Athenian comedy rendered it unsuited to the ears and eyes of any women save *hetairai*. More than this, however, Attic comedy served as a vehicle for expressing public opinion, and politics and politicians were frequently dealt with in merciless fashion. Personalities were indulged in with a freedom, and often grossness, inconceivable at the present day, and one of the most remarkable characteristics of the Aristophanic drama is the amazing freedom with which the gods, and especially Dionysos himself, are treated as subjects for the most ribald jesting. The audience, in its turn, was equally unrestrained in expressing its opinions, and though the presence of the police—called *rhabdophoroi*, or cudgel-bearers—was doubtless not without its effect, a bad actor was apt to find himself speedily whistled, if not pelted, off the stage. Rain, though naturally a less mournfully intermittent phenomenon than in our own “depression”-haunted islands, occasionally modified the enjoyability of a performance *al fresco*: and King Eumenes of Pergamon earned the gratitude of Athenian play-goers by the erection of a splendid two-storied portico—now represented only by the back wall—where the audience could take shelter in the event of a sudden downpour.

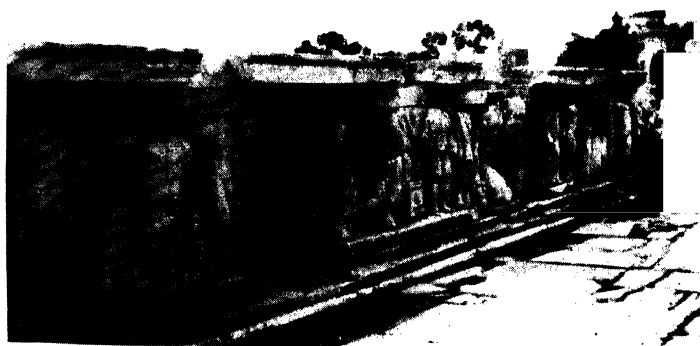


Even as early as the fifth century B.C. the theatre was occasionally used as a convenient place for public and political assemblies, and after the construction of the stone seating such use became regularly established. Frequently the play itself was preceded by some public ceremony. A herald, for instance, might proclaim the state award of a crown— analogous to our Order of Merit—to some distinguished citizen such, e.g., as Demosthenes: or the gift of some friendly Eastern potentate to the Athenian people might be publicly displayed. At such times, too, the orphans of citizens who had fallen in the wars, having completed their education at the expense of the state and arrived at manhood, paraded in full military panoply before finally passing out of state tutelage and assuming the full rights of citizenship.

The innately religious character, at least in origin, of the Athenian drama is shown, not only by the prominent position accorded to the priest of Dionysos, but by the fact that the foundations of two temples, dedicated to the wine-god and his mystic cult, immediately adjoin the theatre. The larger and later of the two, which is probably not earlier than about 420 B.C., contains the foundations of a large base—doubtless that of a seated image of Dionysos by Alkamenes, in ivory and gold, which is frequently represented on Athenian coins. Near by is a round altar, sculptured with wreaths and Silenus-masks, which may well have belonged to this temple, though it is not earlier than the second century B.C. The smaller temple, which, judging from the masonry, dated from before the Persian wars, abuts on the south-western end of the stage, and is almost certainly the original temple of the Eleutherian Dionysos. The shrine of Dionysos Eleutherios was of especial sanctity, and contained an extremely ancient wooden effigy of the god, which according to tradition had been brought from



ATHENS: THE THEATRE OF DIONYSOS.



*Photos. by Author*

ATHENS: STAGE OF DIONYSIAC THEATRE.



Eleutheræ in Bœotia when the Dionysiac worship was first introduced into Attica.

For Dionysos, it must be remembered, was not a native deity of Athens: indeed by birth he was not even Greek. At some prehistoric period he had arrived in Greece from his native Phrygia by way of Thrace, usurping on the way the titles and honours of various local divinities, such as Iakchos, the old chthonic (?) deity of Eleusis. The tradition of his "naturalization" at Athens, when, as a distinguished foreigner, he was made welcome and given to wife the greatest lady of the land, lingered on in the spring ceremonies of the Anthesteria or Flower Festival, one of whose most curious features was the mystic marriage of the ancient image with the Basilinna in the Boukoleion (literally "ox-stall"), the official residence of the King Archon.

Of all the Dionysiac festivals at Athens the most famous was the Greater or City Dionysia, so called to distinguish it from the Rustic Dionysia in December, which was a comparatively unpretentious affair. The City Dionysia, which took place between the end of March and the beginning of April, lasted for six days, and culminated in the production of comedies, tragedies and satyric dramas in the theatre below the Acropolis. Beyond the Dipylon gate was the Lenaion<sup>1</sup>—the sanctuary of the "wild women" (*lenai*) or Mænads—where dramatic exhibitions had once taken place before the building of the Dionysiac theatre: while yet another small temple of Dionysos, opened but once a year, was situated near the Academy, on the road

<sup>1</sup> The Lenaion was a favourite haunt of Athenian prostitutes. Its actual locality has been much disputed. For evidence that it lay outside the Dipylon see A. Frickenhaus, *Jahrb. d. kais. deutsch. arch. Instit.*, 1912, xxvii, 80 ff., and *Winckelmannsfest. Progr.*, Berlin, lxxii, 29 ff.

to Eleusis. One of the most picturesque events of the Athenian year must have been the procession which during the festival carried the image of the god to this temple and back again to the temple below the Acropolis. It was a carnival of the wildest gaiety, especially in the time of Herodes, who, with his usual open-handedness, on one occasion feasted the revellers with wine on couches of ivy in the Kerameikos. Not till after nightfall did the returning procession pass once more through the Dipylon—a wild and whirling rout of wine-flown celebrants—singing, dancing, laughing, brandishing goblets and flaming torches. Their costumes were no less fantastic than their actions. Nymphs with vine-wreathed tresses wildly streaming, Bacchanals with fawn-skin and thyrsos, Fauns and Satyrs crowned with wreaths of ivy and oak-leaves, Hours and Seasons, reeled and raved in tipsy frenzy through the Agora—“so many, and so many, and such glee.”

High above the back wall of the theatre two conspicuous columns surmount the entrance to a small cavern. They originally formed part of another choragic monument set up in 320 B.C. by a certain Thrasyllus of Dekeleia, and were surmounted by tripods. A seated statue—now headless—of Dionysos in the British Museum is believed to have come from this monument. The grotto below the columns is dedicated to the Panagia Speliotissa—the Virgin of the Cave—and the lamp before her image may nightly be descried, a tiny golden star against the dark mass of the Acropolis.

Dionysos, however, was not the only deity to occupy the southern slopes of the Acropolis hill. Adjoining the theatre on the west are the remains of the sanctuary of Asklepios, which may have existed as early as the fifth century. The actual ruins, however, are mostly about a

century later: the most conspicuous being those of a portico once paved—as some scanty fragments prove—with Hymettian marble, and divided down the centre by a row of columns, of which little but the stylobate is now visible. Doubtless this was the dormitory for pilgrims and patients, whose treatment is vividly pictured for us by Aristophanes in his *Ploutos*, though some other sanctuary of Asklepios is obviously referred to. The western end of this portico was in part converted into a vaulted passage in the Middle Ages. At the other end was probably a stair leading to an upper story.

The sacred spring has not lost its healing virtues, at least in the opinion of the poorer classes at Athens, some of whom may be seen almost daily bending above the rock-cut channel to scoop up the water in their hands. The grotto in which it rises has long been converted into a chapel. It is entered by an arched door in the back of the portico, which, like the circular channel within the grotto, dates only from Christian times. At the western end of the portico is a square platform, in which is a wide circular shaft about 7 feet in depth, together with the bases of four columns of Hymettian marble which once supported a canopy above it. The purpose of the shaft is uncertain, some taking it for a sacrificial pit, while others have suggested that it was the enclosure for the harmless yellow serpents kept in the sanctuary as sacred to the god.<sup>1</sup> There are the remains of two small temples—one of Asklepios, the other probably to be identified with a temple of Themis mentioned by Pausanias—as well as of a four-roomed building which may have housed the priests and other temple functionaries. This last, however, does not seem to be earlier than the middle of the second century B.C.

<sup>1</sup> It is not unlikely that "Asklepios" itself originally meant simply "snake." *Vide* Cook, *Zeus*, II, ii, 1085-7 (App. L, 5).

It was, of course, customary for grateful patients to make offerings to the shrine, just as small silver effigies representing various parts of the body are suspended in churches to-day in Greece and southern Italy. Theophrastos in his "Characters" describes the type of man who makes an offering of a brass finger, and almost wears it away by coming every day to polish it. One of the most interesting *ex votos* actually found in the sanctuary is a marble slab engraved with three hymns. They were composed by a former temple attendant who had been a victim of gout. In the first two he implores release from his malady that he may return to the god's golden house and "behold thee, my god, who art brighter than the earth in spring." His prayers were evidently answered, for in the third hymn he pours out his thanks that he can at last walk firmly upright once more, and is no longer compelled to limp painfully or crawl like a crab from place to place.

The south-western angle of the hill is occupied by the imposing ruins of the splendid opera-house (*Odeion*) with which Herodes, who dedicated it to his wife Annia Regilla, enriched the city about the middle of the second century A.D. Built on the lines of a Roman theatre, such as the theatre of Marcellus at Rome, it was covered with a magnificent roof of cedar-wood, the suspension of which above so large a space is still something of a problem to architects. Even in its present state of ruin one can still picture it to some extent as it must have looked when its towering rows of seats were crowded with five thousand spectators, its walls panelled with costly marbles, and its marble-paved orchestra thronged with white-robed singers, to whose song the fountain in the centre maintained its silver-murmured accompaniment. One can still see the doors—three in the back wall and two more in the wings or *paraskenia*—through which

## EAST AND SOUTH OF THE ACROPOLIS 71

the masked and buskined actors made their exits and entrances; and trace the line of the columns once supporting the balcony, at the back of the stage, on which appeared, not Juliet to her Romeo, but the gods themselves to the mortals in whose destinies they had deigned, or been provoked, to intervene. Considering the dimensions and the obvious importance of the building, it is strange that so little should be known about it or its fate. Up to the middle of the last century the great ruin was almost completely concealed by earth and rubbish, and only the presence of ashes and half-molten fragments of metal enabled the excavators to deduce that the Odeion at some unknown period had been destroyed by fire.



## CHAPTER IV

### WEST AND NORTH OF THE ACROPOLIS

A LITTLE below and to the right of the entrance to the Acropolis a rugged mass of rock, ascended by a flight of roughly hewn steps, rises conspicuously from the north side of the ridge. It is the famous Areopagos, or "Field of Ares," where was wont to assemble the supreme court of Athens, the council of archons, which was alone competent to pronounce judgment on those accused of murder. It is a singular place for a tribunal, and one can only wonder whether the summit of the rock in ancient times was less appropriately suggestive than it is to-day of the slippery places in which the wicked proverbially stand. Careful scrutiny reveals the rock-hewn levels of various former altars, but of the "Stone of Violence" and the "Stone of Ruthlessness" on which accuser and accused took their stand before the council no trace can now be identified.

Legend declared that Ares, the god of war, had been the first to be tried at the Areopagos, having slain Hallirrhothios, the son of Poseidon, who had seduced Ares' daughter, Alkippe. Probably the legend arose from an attempt to explain the connection of the locality with Ares, since it was especially sacred, not to Ares, but to the mysterious beings known as the Venerable Goddesses (*Semnai Theai*), who were never mentioned by name. They appear to have been two in number, and, like Demeter and Kore, doubtless simply represented the earth-goddess in a special form. It

is significant that a man whose death had been falsely reported had, on his reappearance, to avoid the shrine of the Semnai: since—to quote Farnell—“he had been, *ex hypothesi*, within the range of their kingdom, and they might claim him as their own.” Within the tangled thicket overshadowed by the eastern extremity of the rock is the gloomy pool and sanctuary of the Venerable Ones, where, in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus, Orestes at length finds absolution after his murder of Klytemnestra. His tomb, indeed, was shown here till comparatively late, but the poet’s identification of the Semnai with the Eumenides or Furies has found small favour with modern scholars.

For most people, doubtless, the Areopagos is chiefly associated with St. Paul, who selected it as the place from which to deliver his famous homily to the Athenians regarding the Unknown God. It was on this occasion that he made his first convert in Athens—an event commemorated by the ruins of a small church dedicated to St. Dionysius the Areopagite which may be seen below the northern side of the rock.

From the Areopagos a path leads down the hill to an important area excavated since 1891 by the veteran German archæologist, Professor Dörpfeld. It is bounded on the west by the modern thoroughfare which leads through the valley between the Areopagos and the Pnyx hill to the Theseion. The confusion of walls and foundations dating from successive periods is almost impossible to make out without a detailed plan, especially as the remains, at no time strikingly conspicuous, are now largely overgrown by weeds and grasses.

Roughly triangular in shape, the area is traversed by an ancient street, once bordered by shops. Though curiously narrow, this is believed to have been the street along which

the Panathenaic procession passed on its way from the Agora to the Acropolis. Further west were found various scanty traces of the nine-spouted fountain into which Peisistratos converted the old town spring. As this was henceforth known as Enneakrounos, its old name of Kallirrhoe was transferred, as the town gradually expanded on the south and east, to the spring in the rocky bed of the Ilissos.

Further towards the north extremity of the excavated area was discovered a triangular precinct partly overlaid by the ruins of a Roman hall belonging to the Dionysiac guild of the Iobacchi. Within the precinct are remains of an ancient wine-press and of two small temples whose construction shows that they were built before the days of Peisistratos. According to Professor Dörpfeld, whose opinion is shared by most archæologists, this was the Dionysiac sanctuary called "in the Marshes" (*en limnais*). It was open only during the spring festival of the Anthesteria, on the day of the "Feast of Pots," when people brought new wine and garlands to the priestess, and drank copious potations to the god. This is the festival alluded to by the Frog Chorus in Aristophanes, when they croak,

*In Limnai we hymned the divine  
Nyseïan Giver of Wine,  
When the people in lots  
With their sanctified Pots  
Came reeling around the shrine! <sup>1</sup>*

Standing up boldly to the south-west of the Acropolis is the Mouseion, or Hill of the Muses: more generally known as the Hill of Philopappos, from the ruined sepulchral monument so conspicuous on the summit. It was erected by the Athenians in the reign of Trajan to the memory of

<sup>1</sup> Trans. Professor Gilbert Murray,

Caius Julius Antiochus Philopappos, citizen of Athens by adoption, but the lineal descendant of a long line of Oriental monarchs. His grandfather was no less than Antiochos IV, the last king of Commagene, who had been dethroned and exiled by Vespasian: a fact which in no way deterred Philopappos from becoming a loyal subject of the Empire, and even attaining to the honours of consulship. In the central niche of the monument, gazing proudly or affectionately over the city, sits Philopappos himself, with his ill-starred grandsire on his right hand: a similar statue of the founder of the dynasty, King Seleukos Nikator, was originally on the other side. Below is the relief of a triumphal procession, which doubtless represents Philopappos in all his glory as a Roman consul. The tomb has recently been enclosed by a railing: not before it was time, since the marble, to a height of more than 6 feet, is scrawled over with pencilled autographs. One almost forgets the monument, however, in the contemplation of the superb panorama of city and plain, of mountain and bay and headland, and the blue, island-bedecked Ægean, that meets one's gaze on every side. The Acropolis and its temples, especially towards sunset, are displayed in unforgettable majesty—

*a throne of the seas;  
Looking out on the hills olive-laden,  
Enchanted, where first from the earth  
The grey-gleaming fruit of the Maiden  
Athena had birth;  
A soft grey crown for a city  
Beloved, a City of Light . . . <sup>1</sup>*

The road to Philopappos passes the little church of St. Demetrios, from the neighbourhood of which the fatal shot is said to have been fired against the Parthenon. The full

<sup>1</sup> Eur., *Trojan Women* (trans. Professor Gilbert Murray).

title of the church since the middle of the seventeenth century is St. Demetrios the Bombardier, a name which it is said to have acquired in curious wise. In 1656 the Turkish commandant maliciously determined to destroy the church during a festival by levelling his guns on it from the Acropolis. The wary saint, however, evidently acting on the principle that "thrice is he armed who gets his blow in fust," ingeniously forestalled the proposed outrage by sending a violent thunderstorm on the previous night, in the course of which a flash of lightning exploded the powder-magazine in the Propylæa, and blew the wicked commandant and all his family into the air. While admiring his dexterous handling of the Olympian thunderbolt, one cannot but feel that a saint with any sense of proportion might well have saved his very third-rate church without ruining one of the world's greatest architectural masterpieces. *Tantæ animis celestibus iræ.*

Scattered thickly over all the neighbouring hill-sides are remains, hewn in the rock, of houses, tombs and cisterns. In very early times this district must have been one of the most densely populated in the city, but it was already deserted in the fourth century B.C. One of the best examples of these prehistoric rock-dwellings is the so-called "prison of Socrates," with whom, needless to say, it has no real connection. Like any other available shelter, it was doubtless seized upon thankfully in 431 B.C., at the outset of the Peloponnesian War, when the invasion of Attic territory by the Spartans filled the city to overflowing with refugees from all over the country-side. In the comparatively recent years before it was closed by an iron grille, local superstition regarded it as a sort of shrine of the Fates: and it was by no means uncommon to find there offerings of honey, almonds, cake and incense, left in the hope of propitiating

its supernatural inhabitants. Further to the west one comes upon a group—likewise cut out of the rock—of seven seats or thrones, whose purpose is unknown, but which were probably used by some early tribunal. Professor Cook suggests that they are the legendary “Seats of Zeus,” where Athena, during her contest with Poseidon, pleaded with the great Sky-God for his vote in her favour, and promised in the event of her victory to sacrifice her victim on the altar of Zeus Polieus.

Following a winding path northward from St. Demetrios one quickly reaches the summit of the hill called the Hill of the Nymphs, whereon Themistokles had his dwelling. Here, looking across the valley to the Acropolis, is the Pnyx, where political assemblies were regularly held until their transference to the theatre of Dionysos, and where, in 433 B.C., the astronomer Meton set up the first sundial ever seen at Athens. The name of Pnyx seems to have been applied frequently to the entire hill, which was also the scene of a mysterious festival held in October, and known as the Thesmophoria, from which men were rigorously excluded. One of the principal features of the celebrations consisted in the flinging of pigs into certain underground chasms or vaults, along with ritual cakes shaped like serpents or *phalli*: some time subsequently women descended into the abyss, collected the putrefying flesh, and placed it on the altars. We are evidently confronted by a ritual of appeal to the unseen powers of the underworld, who cherish the grain in darkness and cause it to send up its green shoots in due season. To obtain a piece of the rotting flesh and sow it along with the grain was believed to be an infallible method of securing a good crop.

The appearance of the Pnyx has been altered to such a degree that it is now difficult to realize its original arrange-

ment. The assembly-place, roughly semicircular, is still bounded at its circumference—i.e. towards the valley—by a retaining wall of Cyclopean masonry, which, however, has been greatly reduced in height by the Turks, who used it as a convenient quarry. The chord of the semicircle consists of another wall hewn out of the solid rock to a depth of 13 feet, and receding slightly towards the centre. At this point three steps form, as it were, a base for a gigantic monolithic block resembling an altar, with a flight of steps on each side. This was undoubtedly the *bema*, or tribune, and from its foot orators harangued the populace seated on the grassy slopes which, till the partial demolition of the great retaining wall below, faced the bema as the seats in a theatre face the stage. Its use as a tribune, however, may not have been the original one. A little to the left is a large curved niche in the rocky face—perhaps for a statue—surrounding which are a number of small rectangular niches for the insertion of votive tablets. Nearly a dozen such were in fact found lying at the foot of the wall in 1803, and are now in the British Museum. They bear reliefs of various parts of the body, and were dedicated—chiefly by women—to “Zeus the Highest” (*Hypsistos*). Though the tablets found were all of the Roman period, it is not unlikely that the cult of Zeus Hypsistos had existed here from prehistoric times, and that the great bema was, as its shape suggests, originally the altar of the god.

According to Plutarch, the bema originally faced the sea, but was shifted so as to face inland by the oligarchical government set up at the end of the Peloponnesian War and nicknamed, from its oppressive character, “the Thirty Tyrants.” What Plutarch means, probably, is that the assembly was compelled to meet in a new place, from which the sea was no longer visible. Higher up the slope and commanding

an admirable view of the distant bay of Phaleron, is another and somewhat smaller monolith, whose altar-like shape is still distinguishable despite its mutilation. Here, probably, we have the original bema and place of assembly before the Thirty, anxious that the Athenians should not be unnecessarily reminded of their lost maritime empire, compelled the assemblies to be held lower down the hill, where the orator would have, not the sea, but the Acropolis before his eyes.

A little north-east of the Theseion station on the electric railway to Piræus lies the ancient cemetery of the Kerameikos, or Potter's Field, though unfortunately it is no longer, as in the days of Perikles, "the most beautiful spot outside the walls." As in all Greek cities, it was forbidden, save in exceptional circumstances, to bury the dead within the walls: partly from a superstitious unwillingness that the dead should inhabit the haunts of the living, and partly—though this doubtless came later—from a sense of hygiene. Every road outside the gates thus became a veritable avenue of sepulchral monuments, extending frequently for miles. Roman examples of this practice are, of course, well known, such as the Street of Tombs at Pompeii, the Via Appia at Rome, the Aliscamps at Arles. The Kerameikos cemetery at Athens, on the other hand, is the only one of its kind yet discovered in Greece.

Nowadays many of the most important monuments have been removed to the safety of the National Museum. It is there, for example, that we must seek the beautiful stele which represents an Athenian lady named Hegeso selecting a jewel for her adornment from a casket proffered by an attendant, and the spirited relief of the young warrior Aristonauates, who seems on the point of springing furiously to the attack—two of the best examples of Attic art in the fourth and fifth centuries. Many others, unfortunately,



were wilfully destroyed in the last century during the construction of the road to Piræus. Enough, however, remain to help us in picturing the scene when Perikles in person delivered an oration above the bodies of those who had fallen in battle at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. The spirit, if not the actual words, of the address of the great statesman is preserved in the speech which Thucydides, who was most probably present, puts into his mouth. "The whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men"—so runs perhaps its most famous passage: "not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions in their own country, but in foreign lands there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them, graven not on stone, but in the hearts of men." <sup>1</sup>

The reluctance of the Greek temper, as evinced in Greek funerary monuments, to dwell upon the idea of death has long been noted, and at times even exaggerated. It is true that scenes of death or mourning are rare, though even these are occasionally found: but a sense of deep, if restrained, pathos continually reveals itself. A favourite motive is that of the deceased, with face mournfully averted, in the act of exchanging a last silent handclasp with a friend or lover. An edicular stele, now in the National Museum, shows us a youth leaning against a column, his favourite hound beside him, while a little slave sits weeping at his feet, and his aged father, opposite, regards him sorrowfully. One of the most sensitive of these monuments, alike in feeling and execution, is the stele in the Museum to the memory of a young soldier who had been drowned at sea on his way home. Seated on the prow of his ship, his shield and spear beside him, he leans his head pensively on his hand, as though dreaming of the beloved shore which he was destined never to reach alive.

*Sunt lacrimæ rerum.* The expression of sorrow is only

<sup>1</sup> Jowett's translation.

the more moving when couched in terms of such delicacy and restraint. It is significant that in almost every instance it is only on the features of the survivors that we observe the tokens of sorrow: on those of the dead man or woman is reflected only a passionless tranquillity, purged of all human emotion.

Envy and calumny and hate and pain,  
And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
Can touch him not, and torture not, again. . . .

This facial impassivity is almost invariable, no matter what may be the action depicted. Sometimes, as in the stele of Hegeso, the deceased are seen engaged in some characteristic action or employment of their daily life: sometimes, as in the monument of Dexileos, the most beautiful of those still *in situ*, we find a nobler and more finely imaginative conception. Slain in battle near Corinth, the young horseman is represented at the moment, not of death, but of victory. With flying cloak and upraised arm, he sits gallantly astride of his rearing charger, transfixing a fallen enemy with his lance: his whole being fused in one fierce flame of exultant action ere it is extinguished for ever.

Sometimes the funeral repast was represented on the tomb. In one relief in the Kerameikos we see this motive oddly combined with that of Charon, the ferryman of the dead, who has rowed up alongside the table, and is extending his hand towards the funeral cakes. For some reason the sculptor has seen fit to equip the boat with a surprising quantity of oars. Close by, on the other side of the street, is the tomb evidently of an unmarried person, whose stele bears the representation of a *loutrophoros*, one of the large pitchers used to fetch the water for the marriage-bath. The reason for such a motive on the tombs of the unmarried is

perhaps to be found in the belief that for those initiated in the mysteries death was but the nuptials of the soul with divinity.

Like all ancient sculpture in marble, all these monuments were rendered as life-like as possible by means of colour, while accessory details, such as the lance of Dexileos and the bridle of his charger, were frequently in bronze. Sometimes, especially in the type of monument resembling a small shrine, painting entirely took the place of sculpture. In the monument of a certain Dionysios, the most conspicuous of all that still line the Street of Tombs, the shrine itself was occupied by a painting, while above stands the finely wrought figure of a bull, the sacred animal of Dionysos, which serves alike to recall the name of the deceased and to commend him, as it were, to the care of the god. To this monument, by the way, attaches the subsidiary interest that on the base was discovered an interesting graffito. It had evidently been scribbled by two lovers. One had written, *κῶμος καλός*, "Komos is beautiful"; to which the devoted Komos had retorted, *καὶ ὁ γράψας*, "So is the writer." So is it that, digging in the dust of death, one wakes the little ghost of love.

Quitting the ancient burial ground, we turn back in the direction of the city. The grass-grown track leads directly to a gate in the city wall flanked by an arched channel through which once flowed the Eridanos. The stream, which no longer exists, was, like the Fleet river in London, converted in ancient times into a sewer. Here, most probably, was the Sacred Gate mentioned by Plutarch, from which ran the Sacred Way followed by the *mystæ* on their night march to Eleusis. To the left of the gate are the foundations, with five rectangular buttresses on the southwest, of a large building called the Pompeion, in which

were stored the vessels and other objects carried in the procession (*pompe*).

In 86 B.C. Athens was stormed by a Roman army under Sulla, who selected this part of the defences for his attack. Part of the ramp constructed by the Roman engineers for bringing up the siege artillery is probably to be recognized in the elevation on which stands the little chapel of the Trinity (Hagia Triada). With characteristic ruthlessness, Sulla followed up his victory by a ferocious massacre in the inner Kerameikos, which lay within the Dipylon gate, and innumerable bones of the victims have been found buried indiscriminately in the vicinity of the chapel. According to Plutarch, Sulla likewise pulled down a large part of the wall near the Sacred Gate, and the jumble of materials composing the upper courses of the wall at this point demonstrates the extemporary nature of the subsequent rebuilding.

In addition to the old wall of Themistokles, excavation has revealed remains of the later fortifications, dating probably from the fourth century B.C. They consist of two parallel walls of stone, the space between being filled with earth. On the right of the Sacred Gate the lower courses of the Themistoklean wall are well preserved. Thucydides describes the haste with which the work was pushed on, even tombstones being seized for building material. Several such early monuments have actually been found here, including the curious bases—now in the National Museum—sculptured with reliefs representing a game of hockey and a fight between a cat and a dog. Following this wall in a north-easterly direction—i.e. towards the Dipylon—we come upon one of the boundary stones of the Kerameikos still in its original position: the words *ὄρος Κεραμεικοῦ* (boundary of the Kerameikos) are vertically inscribed upon it in very clear lettering. Immediately beyond are the

remains of the south-west outer tower, built in reddish blocks of stone, of the Dipylon, the principal gate of ancient Athens, from which diverged the main roads leading both to Bœotia and the Peloponnese. Situated as it was at the lowest part of the city wall, it required to be especially fortified, and for this reason it took the form of two gates, an outer and an inner, with a long narrow court between, enclosed by high walls. An enemy who should force his way into this court immediately became the target for a decimating fire of darts, stones and arrows from three sides at once, and was more than glad if he could get out again. It formed, in fact, a perfect death-trap, from which Philip of Macedon in 200 B.C. extricated himself only with heavy loss, and it was in revenge for his defeat on this occasion that he destroyed Kynosarges and other places beyond the walls.

Little but the foundations of the Dipylon are now visible, while the left, or north-east, side of the gate as one enters has almost entirely disappeared. There were two parallel entrances, each just wide enough to admit a chariot, and separated by a massive pier, the lower part of which still exists, with a large marble base built in front and against it. At the far end of what was once the courtyard are the remains of the inner gate, similar in plan. Just beyond the central pier of the inner gate was an altar of Zeus. On the left is a well-house, once entered between two columns, whose position is clearly visible on the marble pavement, which is deeply worn by the feet of the water-bearers.

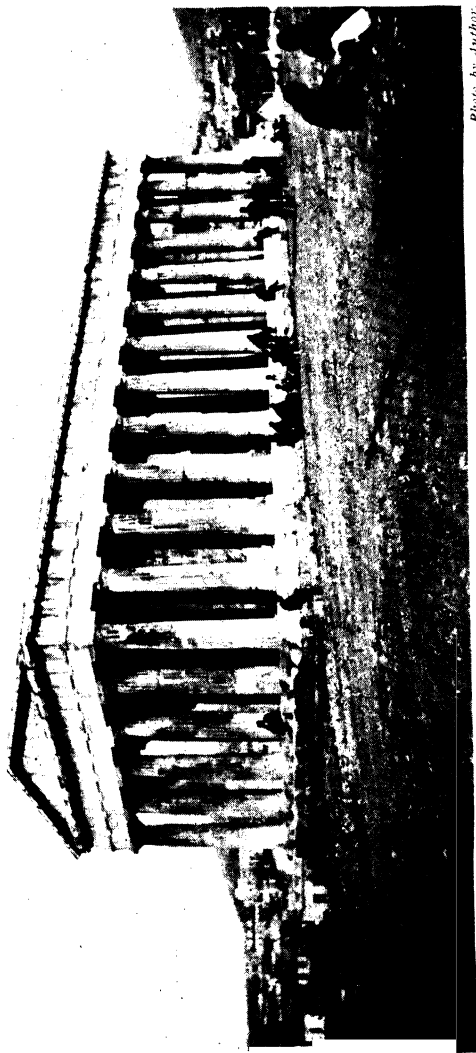
On the opposite side of the gate the excavations of the German School of Archæology have recently uncovered the marble entrance, together with remains of the portico, belonging to the original Pompeion destroyed by Sulla in 86 B.C. A number of the stone projectiles hurled by Sulla's war-engines have also been found here. The building was

restored on a new and larger scale by Hadrian, whose massive foundation-walls are conspicuous. In A.D. 267, however, the Heruli, an invading swarm of barbarians, burst into Greece, and in the sack of Athens the Pompeion was once more razed to the ground. That it was never rebuilt is evident from the remains of a potter's workshop, now protected by an iron roof, which was constructed directly above the ruins of the Hadrianic edifice.

By the second century of our era, when Pausanias wrote his description of Greece, the name of Kerameikos, once denoting the entire quarter, had become restricted to the Agora, or market-place, which was connected with the Dipylon by monumental porticoes. It occupied the low wide area on the north-west of the Acropolis, and stood somewhat in the same relation to Athens as did the Forum to republican Rome. Unlike the Forum, however, very few of the buildings and other monuments which it included have survived, or at least have so far been excavated, even in ruins. An Athenian of the Periklean age would find but one building, of the many once so familiar to his eyes, remaining comparatively as he had last beheld it. The temple of Hephaistos, best preserved of all Greek temples, still stands, as Pausanias described it, on a low hill "above the Kerameikos," to which it formed the western extremity. It was once supposed to be the temple of Theseus, and is still generally known as the Theseion, though the name has long been recognized as erroneous. The exact position of the real shrine of Theseus is, indeed, still uncertain beyond the fact that it was erected somewhere in the Agora—possibly just south of the Monastiraki station—after Kimon had found the mighty bones of the hero in Scyros, and brought them back to Athens amid scenes of the wildest rejoicing.

The Hephaisteion is clearly a creation of the same age as the great structures on the Acropolis, though it must be admitted that its unknown architect wanted the genuine inspiration possessed by Iktinos or Mnesikles. In the Middle Ages it was converted into the church of St. George—a fact to which it doubtless owes its almost perfect preservation. In later times the church dedicated to the patron saint of England was frequently used as a place of burial for English residents in Athens. The Greeks themselves were deeply desirous that Byron should be interred within the venerable temple, and Englishmen to-day can only share their regret that the proposal was rejected.

The eastern limit of the Agora was marked by a great Stoa erected in the second century by the munificence of Attalos II, one of that Pergamene dynasty which repeatedly befriended and enriched Athens. Little remains now of the former magnificence of this colonnade, whose identity is proved by an inscription in large letters which had formerly adorned the architrave. Running almost due north and south, and elevated on a platform reached by three steps, it consisted of a large two-storied portico facing the Agora. At each end of the double file of lofty columns was a large exedra furnished with marble benches: the back was occupied by shops and offices. The columns of the lower story were of the Doric order: those above were Ionic, linked together by delicate marble grilles, in various patterns, a specimen of which is now in the National Museum. In the Middle Ages the Frankish Dukes of Athens utilized the building for part of their system of fortifications. The rooms were filled up with rubble, and the Stoa was converted into a kind of rampart with projecting towers. A section of the medieval wall of which the Stoa was thus made to form part is still to be seen at the north-east angle. Its venerable



*Photo. by Author.*

ATHENS: THE TEMPLE OF HEPHAISTOS OR SO-CALLED THESEION.





appearance caused it to be long mistaken for part of the defences raised by the emperor Valerian in A.D. 253 to repel a threatened invasion by the Goths.

Earlier, however, and far more famous than the Stoa of Attalos were two other stoas—the Stoa Basileios and the Stoa Poikile. Supposed remains of the former, where the King Archon had his offices, have been unearthed at the eastern foot of the hill on which stands the temple of Hephaistos. It is here that Socrates, in the *Euthyphro* of Plato, tells his surprised interrogator that he has been impeached on the charge of corrupting the youth of Athens by his impiety. Hither the Court of the Areopagos was later transferred. The Royal Stoa has an additional interest since it was from this building that the Roman basilicas, and, through them, the Christian churches of basilical form, derived both their name and plan (*cf.* p. 234).

The Stoa Poikile, or “Painted Stoa,” was especially celebrated for the masterpieces of painting by Polygnotos and other artists which it contained. The most famous of these was a great picture of the battle of Marathon, though the identity of the painter is doubtful. It seems to have been a remarkably spirited work, and moreover contained a number of portraits, including not only the Greek leaders, Miltiades and Kallimachos, but also the Persian generals, Datis and Artaphernes. Æschylus, who fought in the battle, was of course depicted, as well as the heroic part played by his brother, Kynaigeiros, who had clung to one of the Persian ships till a Persian soldier chopped off his hand. The painter had not even omitted the incident of a dog which had distinguished itself by fighting side by side with its master, using the weapons with which nature had supplied it.

The Painted Stoa claimed additional fame as the meeting-place of the “Stoic” school of philosophy—to which it gave

its name—founded by Zeno. It was however by no means frequented only by philosophers, since it was one of the most popular resorts in Athens. We even hear of jugglers and mountebanks exhibiting their skill there, while on occasion it was also used as a law-court. Under the despotism of the Thirty Tyrants fifteen hundred persons were put to death there without trial on a single day. Near by lived Meton, the astronomer who set up the sundial on the Pnyx. During the Peloponnesian War he was ordered on active service with the ill-fated expedition to Syracuse, but hoodwinked the authorities into granting him exemption by pretending to be insane, and setting fire to his own house. With so many interesting associations, it is unfortunate that the exact position of the Stoa should still be in doubt.

The so-called Stoa of the Giants lies in a small open space off the Rue des Eponymes, about half-way between the temple of Hephaistos and the Stoa of Attalos. Of the three curious figures—evidently pillars for the support of an architrave, like the Maidens of the Erechtheion—only one, with characteristically serpentine lower limbs, is a true “giant,” the other two being clearly Tritons. They appear to have been taken from some unknown building of the Antonine period, whereas the sculptured bases on which they stand are much later—probably of the reign of Diocletian or even of Constantine. These bases would seem to have been added when the figures were incorporated in what was perhaps a monumental entrance to the Agora.<sup>1</sup> Excavations have shown that this structure, of which little now remains, stands on part of the north side of an earlier and unknown building of apsidal form, running east and west—probably a basilica erected in Roman times to enclose the

<sup>1</sup> Ch. Van Essen, *Le Monument dit Portique des Géants à Athènes*, Bull. Corr. Hell., 1926.

Agora on the north, as the Stoa of Attalos bounded it on the east. Three large doorways gave admission on the north side, where the three Giants are now, while at the east end, facing the apse, was a portico or vestibule.

The excavations recently begun by the American School of Archæology may possibly throw a light on the former whereabouts of many buildings which have now completely vanished. Gone, for example, are the Stoa of Zeus, which contained a famous series of paintings by Euphranor: the Metroon, or shrine of the Mother of the Gods, whose precinct was once the haunt of the Cynic, Diogenes: the Tholos, a circular building of stone with a conical roof, which was usually known as the Umbrella (*Skias*): the Orchestra, apparently a circular dancing-place where public festivals were celebrated, and where booksellers had their stalls. Some fragments of foundation-walls near the northern slope of the Acropolis perhaps mark the respective sites of the Anakeion, an ancient sanctuary of the Dioskouroi, which was adorned with paintings by Micon and Polygnotos, and of the Bouleuterion, or Council Hall, where the council of the Five Hundred was wont to assemble. Perhaps its most dramatic memory is the impeachment and condemnation of Theramenes, who had opposed the violence and rapacity of the Thirty Tyrants, by his enemy Kritias. Springing on to the sacred hearth of Hestia, Theramenes in vain called upon the terrified Council to protect him: the armed followers of Kritias dragged him away to prison, where the fatal hemlock was immediately administered. "This for the gentle Kritias!" he exclaimed, with bitter irony, as, with the gesture of a player at *kottabos*, he jerked the last drop of poison upon the floor of his cell.

The Prytaneion, or Town Hall of Athens, must also have stood somewhere below the north slope of the Acropolis,

since it was above it that the Persians had succeeded in scaling and capturing the hill. Here famous citizens and distinguished foreign visitors were entertained at the expense of the state, and Socrates at his trial declared that not death but public maintenance for life in the Prytaneion should justly be his reward. To most people, however, life on such terms would seem no great boon, for public entertainment at Athens was little more than a gesture, and the idea of anything corresponding to a Guildhall banquet would have struck an Athenian dumb with amazement. The laws drawn up by Solon about 593 B.C. allowed only for a barley loaf on ordinary days and a wheaten loaf on festivals: and even divinities, such as the Dioskouroi, who were solemnly invited to accept the hospitality of the state on certain special occasions, were treated to nothing more luxurious than cheese, barley-cakes, pears and fallen olives.

As one might expect, the Agora was crowded with statues. There was the Hermes of the Market-place, one of the most popular statues in the city, and, though archaic, of such perfection that sculptors were continually modelling from it. "Who's this hurrying towards us," says Zeus, in Lucian's witty dialogue, *Zeus the Tragedian*, "with his hair tied back in old-fashion style? Why, Hermes, if it isn't your brother from near the Painted Stoa in the Agora—all over pitch from the sculptors making casts of him!" Near the Bouleuterion Pausanias saw a statue of Demosthenes, of which the well-known statue in the Vatican is possibly a copy. Of a noted group—probably in bronze—by Kephisodotos, representing Peace (*Eirene*) with the infant Wealth (*Ploutos*) in her arms a marble copy has been identified beyond doubt in the Glyptothek at Munich.

Most famous of all, doubtless, were the statues of Harmodios and Aristogeiton, the reputed liberators of Athens from the tyranny of the Peisistratids. Their murder of

Hippias, the son and successor of Peisistratos, was actually prompted by a private grievance, but on the eventual expulsion of the dynasty this fact was forgotten or overlooked, and the deed was ascribed to motives of the purest patriotism. The original statues made by Antenor at the beginning of the sixth century had been carried off by the Persians, and were found and sent back by Alexander on his capture of Susa a century and a half later: but a new group—probably as like the old ones as possible—had been made by Kritios and Nesiotes some time after 480 B.C., and stood in the vicinity of the temple of Hephaistos. The well-known group in the Naples Museum probably gives a fairly accurate idea of the statues, which, however, were in bronze, as is clear from an amusing story in Plutarch. At the court of Dionysios I, tyrant of Syracuse, conversation at dinner once turned on the question of what was the best kind of bronze. Turning to the Athenian orator, Antiphon, Dionysios asked his opinion, to which Antiphon dryly replied that the best was undoubtedly the kind of which were made the statues of the two tyrannicides.

By the time of Pausanias' visit to Athens, the Agora was divided by a row of Hermæ into two parts, north and south: the former devoted to trade and business, while the latter was the focus of political life. The northern half, the real market, with its porticoes and stoas, its lanes of awninged stalls, its bawling vendors and jostling crowds, must have presented a lively scene. It seems to have been split up by movable barriers into a number of smaller areas, called "circles" (*kukloi*), each of which was almost exclusively given over to some particular form of commerce: somewhat, no doubt, as in medieval London poulterers and butchers, bakers and milkmen, booksellers and money-changers, each had their own quarter, whose names still lend interest to the streets that have succeeded them.

Needless to say, the activities of the Athenian market were manifold. Here one might turn over the latest fashions in embroidered veils, shawls, mantles or sandals; or, if one's means were more modest, make a careful choice from a plentiful array of second-hand clothing. Jewellers displayed the most fashionable designs in pins, rings, *fibulæ*, necklaces and plate: potters decked their shelves with every variety of ware, from kitchen pots and skillets to graceful vases moulded from the local clay for which the Kerameikos was famous, and painted by the finest artists of the day. Here a slave-dealer vaunted the merits of his human cattle: here, again, a wine-merchant plucked you by the cloak, and entreated you "only to taste—real nectar, by Dionysos!" One is reminded of medieval Cheapside as depicted in *Piers Plowman*:

*Both bakers and brewers, butchers and others,  
Websters and walkers and winners with hands,  
As tailors and tanners and tylors of earth . . .  
Cooks and their knaves cried, "Hot pies, hot!"  
Good goose and pork, go dine, go!  
Taverners, "A taste for nought!" told the same,  
"White wine of Alsace and of Gascony,  
Of La Reole and La Rochelle the roast to defy!"*

Besides the big emporers (*emporoi*), there were of course scores of petty traders (*kapeloi*), whose premises consisted of a mere stall, or even a barrow, and whose reputation was often as unsavoury as the fish or cheeses, the garlic or blood-puddings, which they thrust under the noses of the passers-by. One pictures, too, the perfumed dandy, with his sycophant whispering in his ear; the lover selecting a garland to hang at his mistress's doorway; the fat *bon-vivant* haggling over a choice piece of fish, or eyeing with gluttonous appreciation the string of plump quails over a poulterer's stall. Country-folk from Dekeleia, charcoal-burners from Acharnæ,

gathered to watch the cavalry recruits at their riding-lessons near the Hermæ, while close by was a barber's shop which was a favourite resort of idlers in quest of the latest gossip. We may notice also the mean man described by Theophrastos, who goes all round the market, looking at everything and buying nothing; and the still more insufferable person who, after ostentatiously insisting on being shown the most expensive embroideries, pretends to discover that his fool of a slave has allowed him to leave all his money at home.

Of the monumental buildings which arose in Roman times to the east of the Agora the most important was probably the great library built by Hadrian. St. Jerome refers to it as "a wonderful work," and Pausanias, who describes it as "most splendid of all," says that it had a gilded roof and one hundred pillars, that it was adorned with alabaster, and enriched with paintings and statuary. The general plan, which can still be made out, is that of a great quadrangle, surrounded by a colonnaded cloister. Not one of the columns of Phrygian marble in the cloister is now standing, but the marks of the bases show that they numbered exactly one hundred, thus confirming the words of Pausanias. Off the cloister, on the east side, opened five chambers in a row, which probably formed the actual library. The centre of the court was originally occupied by a large ornamental pool: later this was filled in, and curved porticoes built on the site. The columns actually standing are a mere restoration, and the difficulty of comprehending the plan of this central structure is increased by the presence of the remains of two successive churches, though a fragment of the original marble wall may be seen on the north-east side. The outer wall of the great building, where it adjoins a former Turkish mosque on the north-west, is



still faced by seven engaged columns with Corinthian capitals and entablature.

South of the library lie the remains of a market-place of Roman times. The inscription above the arch states that it was dedicated under Augustus, about the beginning of the first century A.D., to Athena Archegetis (the Founder). Just within the gate stands a tall stele engraved with an edict of Hadrian, regulating the price of oil and salt and the duty to be paid on them. At the other end of the market is the so-called "Tower of the Winds"—really a *horologium* or clock-tower—erected in the last century B.C. by an astronomer named Andronikos of Kyrrhos. This curious little structure is octagonal in shape, each of the eight faces being accurately oriented to one of the points of the compass. On each face, below the cornice, is a sculptured figure representing the Wind from that particular quarter. Below each figure is a sundial, while on the summit of the slightly conical roof a vane in the form of a bronze Triton once pointed with his wand to the figure of the prevailing Wind <sup>1</sup> below. Within the tower was an elaborate water-clock, fed from a cistern still to be seen at the rear of the building. The marble pavement of the tower still displays a series of channels and hollows which were doubtless connected with the working of the clock. The arches, with steps leading up to them, on the right of the tower, perhaps belonged to the Agoranomion, i.e. the building where the overseers of the market had their offices.

<sup>1</sup> Above the entrance is Skiron (N.W.), who as a hot dry wind carries a bronze vessel of charcoal. From L. to R. are: Zephyros (W.), showering flowers; Lips (S.W.), holding the stern ornament of a ship; Notos (S.), the rain-bringer, with a water-vessel; Euros (S.E.), cloaked against the tempest; Apeliotes (E.), with fruits and ears of corn; Kaekias (N.E.), scattering hailstones, or perhaps olives which he has shaken down; Boreas (N.), in a thick-sleeved cloak, and blowing on a conch.



*Photo. by Author.*

ATHENS: THE "TOWER OF THE WINDS."



## CHAPTER V

### MODERN IMPRESSIONS AND ANCIENT MEMORIES

IT is not, perhaps, always realized that the Athens of to-day, apart from its ancient remains, is a wholly modern city built on an ancient site. In 1834, when it became the capital of the new kingdom of Hellas, in place of the Athens of antiquity there remained nothing but a miserable village, and the actual city is chiefly the creation of a German architect. Partly for this reason, perhaps, one's first impression of Athens is apt to be one of disappointment, but one may reassure oneself by remembering that this seems always to have been the case. The newly arrived visitor, says the anonymous writer of a chatty compilation of *reisebilder* in the second century B.C., can hardly believe at first that this is really the Athens he has heard so much about, though he soon finds good reason to change his mind. The modern traveller, too, quickly finds himself responding to the charm which the City of the Virgin Goddess has in all ages exercised upon those who sought her. The unprepossessing thoroughfares of Piræus, the District-like everydayness of the electric railway, everything in short which may have tended to abate the first fine careless rapture with which one sets foot for the first time on Hellenic soil, are forgotten, or at any rate relegated to their rightful insignificance, when, peering through the taxi window, one

suddenly glimpses the columns of the Parthenon sun-gleaming on their precipitous rock.

Is modern Athens really an Occidental or an Oriental city? The question thrusts itself upon the mind of every visitor, but the Athenians, who speak of the rest of Europe as though they were inhabitants of some alien and distant continent, seem to have settled the matter for themselves. On the other hand, the relentless process of standardization at work in Greece as in other countries is gradually ousting the picturesque kilted costume, once universal, and replacing it—even in remote country villages—by the characterless cheap ready-mades of the West. In Athens itself the national dress, derived from the highlanders of Albania, is preserved almost exclusively in the uniforms of the presidential guard, with their snowy kilts and shoes that curve upwards like the prow of a ship to terminate in a large scarlet pompom. Somehow or other, I could never catch sight of those shoes without recalling an absurd rhyme heard years before at a London dinner-table—

*Moses supposes his toeses are roses,  
But Moses supposes erroneouslee:  
For nobody's toeses are posies of roses  
As Moses supposes his toeses to be!*

Apostles of “uplift,” if they read this book, will, I trust, mingle pity with their scorn.

While on the subject of costume, I cannot forbear to describe the poster of a clothing establishment which I once saw adorning a hoarding in one of the main thoroughfares of the city. It must, I think, be unique of its kind. In the foreground the proprietor sat contemplating, with a preoccupied air, a large scroll inscribed “Contract between God and Mr. Mavrodopoulos”—or so we may call him.

Behind Mr. Mavrodopoulos stood the other contracting Party, conventionally, if somewhat draughtily, attired in a nightshirt and a long white beard: while in the background a seemingly endless column of perfectly naked men were hopefully marching four abreast into the premises of the firm, to emerge on the opposite side of the building in the nattiest of gents' suitings. Below this remarkable composition ran the inspiring legend, "God creates men naked, and Mavrodopoulos clothes them for 1250 Drachmas the Suit!" i.e. about £3 10s. Why the "party of the second part" had not himself taken advantage of this eminently reasonable offer is hard to say, beyond the fact that nightgowns, plain or coloured, seem for some reason to have been the favourite attire in celestial circles since the days of Fra Angelico.

It is impossible to imagine such a poster being displayed in Oxford Street or the Strand, but the modern Athenian, like the ancient writers of Attic comedy, makes no scruple about introducing sacred personages into the most absurd or at least incongruous situations. The essential characteristics of Athens, indeed, have changed less than one might have anticipated. As superstitious as in the days of St. Paul, their history of the last decade suggests that the Athenians of to-day are no less ready than of old to indulge in political experiments. The anonymous writer previously mentioned found the city "infested by a set of scribblers": and this is still true, whether it is taken to apply to the journalists who write for Athens' over-numerous newspapers, or the army of foreign correspondents, archæologists and—shall we say?—writers of travel books, for whom Greece is an inexhaustible hunting-ground. The water supply is now at last more or less adequate to the city's requirements, but that many at least of Athens' streets still merit our Anonimo's description as "miserable old lanes" will be denied by nobody

who has picked his painful way, especially by night, amid their unpaved glooms.

One is, of course, apt to think of ancient Athens entirely in terms of the Parthenon, forgetting that Greek houses, even of the wealthy, were anything but imposing, or even beautiful, on the exterior, while the dwellings of the poorer classes must have been no less squalid than those which depressingly line the back streets of the modern city. On the other hand, the intense civic patriotism which made it the pride of many rich Athenians to expend their wealth in the adornment of their city is not less manifest to-day—a fact to which the Varvakeion, the Zappeion, the Academy of Sciences, the Library and numerous other public edifices erected by private munificence bear abundant witness.

The sense of continuity with the past is increased by the everyday use of a Greek which, though not that of Thucydides or Plato, is legitimately begotten of the Greek of the Middle Ages, as that in turn was directly descended from classical Greek and the Hellenistic Greek of the New Testament. For most Anglo-Saxon visitors the language is apt to prove no small difficulty. I once knew an English tourist who, summoning the elusive memories of his school-days to his aid, spent some time in endeavouring to decipher a certain notice in front of the National Museum. He was somewhat annoyed on discovering at length that it was not, as he had supposed, concerned with the contents of the Museum, but was merely a list of *consommations* obtainable at an adjoining café.

Five o'clock in the afternoon finds all Athens assembled in the Syntagma, or Constitution Square—a band not infrequently playing under the trees, and the café tables dotted with little cups of Turkish coffee or glasses of *ouzo*. There is generally at least one customer in each café who

is placidly sucking at a hubble-bubble—a heritage from Turkish times—provided by the establishment. The reader who may desire to try one for himself must not be perturbed if the waiter who brings the pipe first places the unwieldy brass mouth-piece in his own mouth, and sucks vigorously to ensure that it is drawing properly. Here, as everywhere, one notices the curious Greek habit of carrying a string of fat yellow beads to play with. They have no religious significance, and serve merely to occupy the fingers: indeed if actual beads are wanting, your Greek neighbour will fiddle just as contentedly with a key-chain or a piece of string. Among the stream of passers-by is an Orthodox priest or “pope”—a characteristic figure, with his kindly bearded face, and long hair twisted in a tight little chignon behind. His oddly shaped hat—rather like an old-fashioned “stove-pipe” worn upside down—is known as a *kally-mavchion* or “neck-protector,” despite the fact that it is entirely devoid of brim. The name is said, however, to be a survival from earlier days, before the shady brim had been abolished by a Turkish regulation. Even more typical of modern Athens is the shoeblack, whose name is legion. Squatting on the edge of the pavement, often seven or eight in a row, they greet the passing pedestrian with a staccato rattle of their brushes on the wooden boxes containing their paraphernalia. The dustiness of Athenian streets ensures that they are never in want of employment.

The mention of shoeblacks reminds me that no account, however cursory, of modern Athens must omit a mention of the quaint little thoroughfare known to English and American residents as “Shoe Lane.” It is situated in the old bazaar quarter, close to the former Library of Hadrian. One end of the street is entirely occupied by boot-shops, whose contents, apparently unable to find suffi-



cient accommodation inside, protrude from every door and window, and are even piled in heaps upon the sidewalk. For the rest, it is characterized by shops of another kind—small, twilit, and crowded with all manner of just such objects as are calculated to make a collector's money burn a hole in his pocket. As a matter of fact, the hole need by no means prove a large one, for all kinds of attractive trifles can often be acquired for surprisingly small sums. Many a pleasant hour may be spent in pottering in and out of these little shops—haggling amicably over ikons or ivories, old rings or coins, Greek pottery or Persian glass.

Considering how many foreign masters—Franks and Catalonians, Aragonese, Florentines and Turks—have ruled Athens between the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204 and the War of Liberation from 1822 to 1833, reminders of other than her classical past are curiously few. Save for the small Byzantine Museum, recently transferred to ampler quarters in the Kephissia Road, a scanty handful of small cruciform churches, each with a cupola supported on an octagonal lantern, alone testify to the dominion even of Byzantium. The church of the Kapnikarea in Hermes Street is typical. It consists of two tiny churches joined together: the one dating from the twelfth century, to which the charming porch was subsequently added, the other slightly later. An odd little church, frequented by the very poor, is St. John of the Column, in Euripides Street, with a large antique column, round which the church is built, sticking up through the roof like a chimney. It is much resorted to by invalids, especially fever-patients, who believe that they can get rid of their ailments by tying a shred of their clothing to the column. The superstition thus perpetuated is, of course, long antecedent to Christianity.

Much the most interesting of these early churches, how-

ever, is that which, from its position adjoining the large modern Metropolitan Church,<sup>1</sup> is known as "the Little Metropolitan." • It is generally regarded as dating from the ninth century, which would make it the oldest Byzantine monument still existing in Greece, but there is reason to assign its construction to a period considerably later.<sup>2</sup> In any event, its exterior is extraordinarily attractive, owing to the numerous sculptured fragments built into the walls, though their miscellaneous character and haphazard arrangement bear witness to the barbarity of the age when the church was built. Among these one finds the arms of the powerful families of de la Roche and Villehardouin, who were Dukes of Athens in the thirteenth century, and the imperial eagle of Constantinople: ancient Greek inscriptions and reliefs, one of which, on the apse, has been inserted upside-down: as well as various geometric designs and animal grotesques characteristic of Byzantine decoration. In the upper portion of the façade is an ancient calendar with the signs of the Zodiac, containing interesting scenes of ancient Attic festivals. Unfortunately the Christian builders evidently felt it to be their pious duty to hallow this relic of paganism by carving crosses on it at regular intervals, by which means they almost completely obliterated a representation of the wheeled Ship in which the sacred *peplos* of Athena was carried.

<sup>1</sup> Within this church, on the right, is a long block of grey marble bearing the Greek inscription: "This is the stone from Cana of Galilee, where Jesus Christ our Lord turned the water into wine." This curious relic, believed to have been brought to Greece in the sixth century, is probably the same marble seat which was previously seen at Cana by Antoninus of Placentia (Piacenza).

<sup>2</sup> See K. Michel and A. Struck, *Die Mittelbyzantinischen Kirchen Athens*, Athen. Mitteil., 1906.

Piræus, the port of Athens, though not especially attractive in itself, deserves well of history as being the first European town to be built on the rectangular system, with its main streets parallel to one another, and others crossing them at right angles. The architect was Hippodamos of Miletos, whose invention evoked great interest in other parts of Greece. Other and different memories cluster about Piræus, whence in 415 B.C. the great expedition against Syracuse, the mightiest armada ever launched by any Greek state, sailed forth to its doom with trumpets sounding and oar-blades flashing in the bright sun. The clatter and bustle that must have filled the port when a fleet was getting ready for sea is vividly pictured by Aristophanes in the *Acharnians*, who describes how the place re-echoed

*with a noise of troops;  
And crews of ships, crowding and clamouring  
About the muster-masters and pay-masters;  
With measuring corn out at the magazine,  
And all the porch choked with the multitude;  
With figures of Athena newly furbished,  
Painted and gilt, parading in the streets—*

exactly like the figures of the Panagia and the saints in a religious procession at the present day—

*And wine-skins, kegs and firkins, leeks and onions;  
With garlic crammed in pouches, nets and pokes;  
With garlands, singing girls and bloody noses . . .  
With bangs and thwacks of driving bolts and nails . . .  
With hacking, hammering, clattering and boring . . .  
Words of command, whistles and pipes and fifes.<sup>1</sup>*

Unhappily the great arsenal built by Philo between 347 and 329 B.C. was burnt to the ground on the capture of

<sup>1</sup> Frere's translation.



*By permission of the Hellenic Society*

## THE PLAIN OF MARATHON.



the city by Sulla, but by a freak of fortune the specifications, engraved on a marble slab, were actually found during the last century. "The directions are so full, clear and precise," remarks Sir J. G. Frazer, "that we now know Philo's arsenal from roof to foundation better than any other building of ancient Greece."

The eastern side of the harbour, in the vicinity of the modern Customs where arriving luggage is examined, was occupied by a long colonnade called the Deigma. Here bankers and money-changers had their offices, and Theophrastos gives an amusing sketch of the pompous type of person who would button-hole strangers with descriptions of his great investments on the high seas, interrupting himself ostentatiously to send his servant to the Bank—where his total account was tenpence. Herakleides Pontikos, writing in the fourth century B.C., describes the curious case of a man named Axoneos, who actually laboured under the delusion that he was enormously rich and owned all the ships in the harbour. As shipwrecks and other maritime disasters made not the slightest impression on his mind, he was naturally the happiest man in Athens. His brother from Sicily at last succeeded in getting him cured, but Axoneos always declared that he had really been much happier before. On one occasion the Deigma was the scene of an audacious "hold-up" by the Thessalian chieftain, Alexander of Pheræ, who sailed calmly up the harbour in broad daylight, sprang ashore with his merry men, and, after making a clean sweep of the bankers' counters, sailed safely away again.

Among the environs of Athens two names stand out in sharp relief: Marathon and Salamis. In their effect on the subsequent history of Europe the two famous battles are hardly comparable. The destruction of the Persian fleet at

Salamis definitely served to frustrate the Persian conquest of Greece, the last hope of which was later swept away at Plataea: whereas the Persian defeat at Marathon, crushing as it was, came only as the unlooked-for termination of what was intended merely as a punitive expedition in revenge for the burning of Sardis by the Athenians. The hurt which it inflicted on Persian pride only determined the Great King to substitute conquest for chastisement. On the other hand, this, the first unmistakable success of Greeks against Persians, of West over East, had two important consequences which no later triumph could share: it gave Greece as a whole courage to face the subsequent and more serious invasion, and by the unparalleled prestige with which it invested Athens herself it inspired her for the first time with the dazzling anticipation of her own potential and future greatness.

The road to Marathon, though its surface leaves a good deal to be desired, runs, especially after the village of Charvati, through pleasant pinewoods, intersected occasionally by streams, with beautiful views of the sea and of the long and lofty island of Eubœa. To the left rise the wooded slopes of Mount Pentelikon, famed for its marble quarries. Between the mountains and the sea lies the plain of Marathon, a long, narrow crescent bordered by a wide bay or gulf, with the slender promontory of Kynosoura—"the Dog's Tail"—enclosing it on the north. Each end of the plain is chiefly occupied by a marsh, while about half-way is the little stream of the Charadra. Just north of the Charadra lay at anchor the Persian fleet, while the Persian army, in overwhelming numbers, was encamped on the adjoining shore. The Athenian forces, under their leader, Kallimachos, had taken up a strong position at the mouth of the

little valley of Vrana, about half a mile westward of the site where they afterwards raised a mound, now known as Soros, above their dead. Including a contingent of 1,000 warriors from the little city of Platæa, their numbers amounted to about 10,000 men.

After vainly waiting several days for the Greeks to make the first move, the Persians embarked part of their army, and resolved to advance upon Athens simultaneously by land and sea. In long line their army crossed the Charadra, and came within bowshot of the Athenian army. Kallimachos gave the order to advance: a rain of arrows from the Persian archers only inspired the Greeks to break into a charge, crumpling up the enemy's flanks and closing in upon his still-advancing centre. Standing upon the Soros, erected, doubtless, where the fiercest of the fighting took place, one still seems to see and hear "the flying Mede, his shaftless, broken bow, the fiery Greek, his red, pursuing spear," as the routed army struggled desperately to reach the safety of the ships. Less than two hundred Athenians fell in the battle: the Persians are said to have lost about 6,400.

An easy walk from Piræus brings one to the little point of Keratopyrgos, which commands an unrivalled view of the scene of the battle of Salamis. It is interesting to reflect that but for the persistence of Themistokles, who was in command of the Athenian contingent, the allied fleet would probably have sailed away to the Isthmus of Corinth, so as to have the support of the Peloponnesian army, thus abandoning Salamis, Ægina and Megara to the Persians. He threatened, in fact, to withdraw the Athenian ships altogether if this plan were adopted: and since the fleet would thus have lost nearly 50 per cent. of its strength, the Corinthians and Spartans reluctantly gave way.



From the opposite shore one looks westward straight into the bay of Ambelaki, protected on the south, as by a natural breakwater, by a long, gently sloping promontory. Behind this, as it were in ambush, the Greek fleet was drawn up in waiting. To the east of this promontory, right in the centre of the strait, is the small island of Psyttaleia, with the islet of Atalante beyond. Surveying the scene, Xerxes became alarmed lest the Greeks should escape during the night, and he accordingly ordered his vast fleet to move up on each side of Psyttaleia. A body of troops, including many of the flower of the young Persian nobles, was disembarked on the island itself for the dual purpose of rescuing Persians and killing Greeks who might chance to swim ashore during the battle. The sight of these preparations caused such nervousness among the Greek leaders that Themistokles, realizing clearly the immense advantage of engaging the enemy in the narrow strait, actually induced Xerxes by means of a false message to send a squadron to Megara to block the Greeks' sole remaining way of escape. The tidings of this move reached the Greeks at the very moment when the proposal to abandon the straits was on the point of being carried.

As the sun rose above the mountains on the mainland, the Persian fleet advanced into the straits by the two openings on either side of Psyttaleia. As the leading squadrons came opposite the end of the peninsula behind which the Greek ships were waiting, the Greeks dashed furiously forward, taking them in flank. The remainder of the Persian vessels advanced in confusion to their rescue, impeding each other in the narrow space, which is hardly more than a mile across. Unable to manœuvre, crowded helplessly together, the great armada resembled a sperm whale attacked by a shoal of "killers." Ship after ship was sunk, or,

reduced to little better than a hulk, struggled frantically to cut its way out of the mellay. The Carian queen, Artemisia, who alone had advised the Great King not to risk battle in the straits, only escaped by ramming another of the Persian ships which blocked her path. Xerxes, watching impotently from the mainland, saw the deed, but imagined the sunken vessel to be Greek. "My men have become women," he exclaimed furiously, "my women men!"

"All day long the noise of battle rolled." By sunset the Persian fleet as a fighting unit had ceased to exist: the straits were strewn with bodies and wreckage. To complete the disaster, the detachment on Psyttaleia was now completely cut off. A large body of troops crossed over from Salamis, and, under the very eyes of the Great King, massacred the Persian force to a man. So unbounded was the rage of Xerxes, especially against the Phœnicians, on whom he laid the whole blame for the defeat, that the surviving Phœnician ships incontinently deserted in sheer panic.

One of the most fascinating excursions in the vicinity of Athens is that to the island of Ægina, where the temple of Aphaia stares seaward from its lonely hill. It is built on a platform partly hewn from the solid rock, partly formed of huge polygonal blocks, and paved with rectangular slabs. The group of twenty massive Doric columns of yellowish limestone, still in places retaining their stucco coating, formed part of the outer colonnade. Dating from the beginning of the fifth century B.C., and thus in all probability the oldest of all Greek temples after the Heraion at Olympia, the temple is built above the remains of a temple of the sixth century, which in turn appears to have succeeded to still earlier associations going back to Mycenaean times. It was dedicated to Aphaia, a goddess identified with Diktyнна, the goddess of the nets (*diktyones*), worshipped by fishermen

in ancient Crete. The sculptures from the two pediments, discovered at the beginning of the last century, are now in Munich. They represent scenes from the Trojan War, in which the exploits of the Aiginetan heroes, Telamon and Ajax, are naturally glorified, and appear to have been executed shortly after the defeat of the Persians in the fifth century. Those from the east pediment show a marked superiority, and were probably from the hand of a younger sculptor more closely in touch with the artistic tendencies which within less than half a century were to attain their fullest development in the sculptures of the Parthenon.

"In all Attica," wrote Byron, referring to the promontory of Sunion, "if we except Athens itself and Marathon, there is no scene more interesting." "Interesting" seems a strangely colourless adjective to apply to anything so dramatically beautiful as the snowy columns of Poseidon's temple crowning the grassy headland that rises nearly 200 feet sheer above the amethyst-blue Ægean. Strewn upon its fabled surface the Cyclades, island after island, lead the eye onward to the meeting-place of sea and sky, from Andros on the west to Seriphos and even Melos, far and dim to the south. Eastward the cloud-wrapped heights of Ægina stand out against the blue of the Saronic Gulf and the far-away mountains of the Argolid, while to the north the long and mountainous island of Eubœa rises like an uneven barrier beyond the hills and valleys of Laurion. The low-voiced sea-wind, the restless fretting of the waves against the rocks far below, intensify rather than disturb the enchanted silence as of some older and unfamiliar world, where one half expects to behold the hollow ship of Menelaos gliding past over the wine-dark sea, and hear the cry of lamentation for her steersman Phrontis, slain by the shaft of Apollo.



*By permission of the Greek Travel Bureau.*

TEMPLE OF POSEIDON AT SUNION.



The Doric temple, which was probably built about the same time as the Theseion at Athens, stands above some remains of an older fane, which was probably destroyed by the Persians. In the winter of 413-12 B.C., during the Peloponnesian War, it was fortified by the Athenians as a protection for their corn-ships—the importation of corn having been forced upon them by the Spartan occupation of Dekeleia. On one occasion the slaves employed in the Laurion silver-mines succeeded in murdering their guards and seizing the temple and its temenos, whence they sallied forth, as from a stronghold, to ravage and plunder the surrounding country. Remains of the fortification wall, together with an artificial terrace adjoining the temple on the north, are still visible: traces of a colonnade and gateway on the north of the terrace have also been found, while about a quarter of a mile away to the north-east excavation revealed the foundations of a temple of Athena.

The ancient silver-mines of Laurion, about 6 miles off, may still, I believe, be visited, though the present smelting works in the locality are chiefly concerned with the production of lead. There are over two thousand shafts, with galleries—called *laura* (lanes) in ancient Greek—at levels varying from 80 to 150 feet. Despite legal prohibitions, a greedy proprietor was often tempted to remove the piers of natural rock left to support the roof for the sake of the metal they contained, and a mine-owner named Diphilos was condemned to death for causing an accident in this way. Numerous picks and lamps left by the workmen have been found, besides bars of lead, which are sometimes stamped with a trade-mark. Greece as a whole is poor in precious metals, and as the only other silver-mines were in the island of Siphnos, the importance of Laurion as a factor of Athens' rapid rise to power is easy to perceive. From the time

of Perikles onwards, however, the works declined, and by the first century A.D. the mines were already regarded as exhausted.

High among the hills to the north of Athens, bosomed in shady woods of oak and fir, lies Dekeleia—till recently called Tatoi—a favourite summer resort of the modern Athenians. Before the War the royal family had a palace there. In 413 B.C., acting on the advice of Alkibiades, who had fled into exile, the Spartans seized and garrisoned Dekeleia, which effectually prevented the Athenians from cultivating their territory. Another interesting place is Phyle, situated among the mountains between Attica and Bœotia. At the top of the pass still stands the ancient fortress seized by the patriot Thrasyboulos in 403 B.C. Despite the efforts of the Thirty Tyrants, he succeeded in maintaining himself at Phyle, eventually accumulating a sufficient number of followers to enable him to seize the Piræus and bring about a restoration of the democracy.

## CHAPTER VI

### ELEUSIS

SEVENTEEN miles to the west of Athens lies Eleusis, with its great sanctuary of Demeter and Kore, once the home of the most celebrated Mysteries of the ancient world. Though it is possible to visit Eleusis by train, it is infinitely pleasanter and more convenient to go by car, following the excellent motor road which corresponds very closely to the old Sacred Way trodden by the *mystæ*, and which indeed still bears its name. Just outside the city one observes among the olive-groves on the right of the road the masts of a wireless station which indicates the whereabouts of the Academy, mentioned as early as the sixth century B.C., and converted by Kimon into a sort of park, with walks and avenues, whose plane-trees, in the time of Pliny, were remarkable for their size. Near by was a tower, once inhabited by the celebrated misanthrope, Timon. "The olive-groves of Academe" were especially famous as the spot where Plato had lived and lectured, and where his last resting-place was reverently pointed out: and it was here that Horace, like many another young Roman, pursued his studies. The oil from the sacred olive-trees was kept on the Acropolis, and jars of it were awarded as prizes during the Panathenaic festival.<sup>1</sup>

Beyond the Academy, a brief run in the car brings us to the summit of the low pass over the long ridge of Mount Aigaleos, which commands an extensive view of Athens

<sup>1</sup> See note on page 122.



and the Acropolis. On the right of the pass is the little hill of Hagios Elias (St. Elias), whose name probably implies that it was once the site of a shrine of Helios, the sun-god. Hereabouts in ancient times stood the tomb of an *hetaira* named Pythonike, the most conspicuous and perhaps the most magnificent of all those lining the Sacred Way. Her disconsolate lover had erected a similar monument to her memory at Babylon, the two together costing more than £40,000.

A mile or so further on, on the left, is the former convent of Daphnī, enclosed within a once-crenellated wall, with remains of towers. The massive square blocks of marble of which the church is built were probably taken from a sanctuary of Apollo which once existed near by. Founded in the eleventh century, the convent was fortified anew in the thirteenth by the Burgundian dukes of Athens, of the de la Roche family, whose sole memorial here, however, is an empty marble sarcophagus in the picturesque courtyard, bearing an escutcheon charged with serpents and *fleur-de-lys*. The church is famous for its mosaics. In their original integrity, they must have filled it with subdued yet splendid colour, and even to-day they constitute probably the finest surviving example of this form of art as it existed in the period which followed the long struggle with the iconoclast emperors of Constantinople. One observes an approach to Hellenistic naturalism which is absent from the usually simpler and purer productions of the fifth and sixth centuries, while on the other hand they seem to lack—probably owing to their proximity to Athens—the high sincerity evident in the mosaics of St. Luke of Stiris, situated among the mountains of Phokis.

Despite the obvious restoration—none too skilfully effected—to which the mosaics of Daphnī have been subjected,

the great central tondo of the Pantokrator, i.e. Christ the All-Ruler, still gazes down from the dome with unimpaired, if gloomy, majesty. The artist's mastery of colour and composition are especially noticeable in the two large panels representing the Descent into Hell and the Birth of the Virgin, despite the fact that the latter has been much injured: and there is a wonderful dignity in the two figures of saints—Aaron and Zacharias—which face the entrance. A somewhat unusual detail is the treatment of the cornice, the design on which is not, as one might suppose, merely painted, but cut away and then filled in with some black material.

Beyond the convent the bay of Eleusis comes into sight, dazzlingly blue. Traces of the old Sacred Way, which was here partly hewn out of the rock and partly supported by a stone wall, are observable beside the modern road, while about a mile further on some scanty relics of a sanctuary of Aphrodite may be made out on the right. Skirting the shore of the bay, the road runs past the Rheitoi—two small salt lakes fed by springs, in which the priests of Eleusis alone had the right to fish, and which marked the ancient frontier of Eleusinian territory. Between the Rheitoi and Eleusis itself lies the Thriasian plain, so called from the old Attic *deme* or district of Thria, and the scene of one of the most dramatic legends which focused about the great struggle with the Persians. It was said that two Greek exiles, an Athenian named Dikaïos and the Spartan king Demaratos, were walking in the plain, when they were astonished by the sight of a great dust, far off towards Eleusis. It was such as might be made by a host of thirty thousand men, though, as they well knew, the plain was then wholly deserted: and from its midst there arose a cry like that of the mystic Iakchos at the Eleusinian festival.

The two men gazed in awe, judging the thing to be divine, and of ill omen to the forces of the Great King. "It comes from Eleusis to help the Athenians," whispered Dikaios. "If it turn to the Peloponnese, the peril is to the Persian host, but if it turn to the ships, then the King's fleet is surely doomed." Even as he spoke, the gods revealed their will, for the dust turned to a cloud and floated towards Salamis. . . .

About a mile further on one crosses the Eleusinian Kephissos. Here dwelt the cruel Procrustes, who, till slain by Theseus, compelled such hapless travellers as fell into his clutches to fit his famous bed, racking them if they were too short, and cutting off their legs if they were too long. Here too are remains of the bridge—probably restored by Hadrian—where the pilgrims as they passed were regularly subjected to a running fire of scurrilous abuse, probably for the purpose of averting the malice of unseen powers.

Human habitation at Eleusis has been shown to go back to the third millennium before Christ. In the oldest historical records it is always part of Attica, but that in earlier times it must have been an independent kingdom is evident from the legend which tells how Persephone was carried off by Pluto, god of the underworld, and how the disguised Demeter, seeking her lost daughter, was hospitably received at Eleusis by its king, Keleos. By way of return, the grateful goddess instructed his son, Triptolemos, in the arts of husbandry, and gave him a chariot drawn by dragons or serpents in which he journeyed from land to land, imparting the new knowledge to mankind. Triptolemos is simply the genius of the "thrice-ploughed" (*tripolos*) field, his magic chariot being in all likelihood a symbol of the sun, while his worship probably came to Eleusis from northern Greece along with improved

methods of cultivation. From the north, too, came Dionysos, the old Thracian earth-god and lord of the lower world, who ranked high in the mystic worship of Eleusis, where he was generally known as Iakchos—perhaps the name of an old local, and possibly chthonic, deity. To Pluto also honours were paid, as husband of Persephone, or Kore (the Maiden), with whom, as with her mother, Demeter, the Mysteries were especially associated. Originating probably in Egypt, the Mysteries passed thence into Crete, and so, by way of the Troad, Thrace and Samothrace, to Eleusis. Such at least is the theory to which facts and authorities seem most closely to conform.

The earliest mention of the Eleusinian sanctuary is in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, written about 700 B.C., which shows that the institution of the Mysteries was already long-standing. In historic times the would-be candidate for initiation was required to be an Athenian citizen, by adoption if not by birth, and to speak and understand Attic Greek. He had to pay fees amounting to at least thirty drachmæ, to buy a pig for sacrifice, to buy also a complete outfit of new clothes. Women as well as men appear to have been initiated, though the initiation of women must have differed in various details from that of the men. The first forms of initiation were frequently entered upon at a very early age. Even slaves occasionally seem to have been admitted, but such cases were probably exceptional, and must have involved emancipation, since all initiates were *ipso facto* brothers and equals.

Even under the Empire, when initiates were enrolled from practically every country of the civilized world, the profoundest secrecy was strictly observed regarding the nature of the Mysteries, in which none but the *mystæ* might take part. The solemn proclamation by the herald,

warning all but the pure to depart, was not one lightly to be disregarded. Livy tells how two strangers, who were found to have unwittingly mingled with the crowd of *mystæ*, were actually put to death: and indeed the goddesses themselves were not slow to punish the intruder upon their rites. We hear from Ælian of an Epicurean who, having rashly entered the part of the sanctuary forbidden to all save the hierophant, was forthwith smitten with a fatal malady, while an un-initiate who had climbed on a stone for a view of the Mysteries fell and was killed on the spot. As for divulging the secrets imparted in the Mysteries, such an impiety was almost unheard of, and Horace declares in one of his Odes that he would be afraid to risk himself on the same voyage with such a monster. Curiously enough, the prohibition of the sacred Mysteries to all save the initiated is still perpetuated in the Orthodox Church. "At the solemn moment when the elements are uncovered, the deacon still cries aloud, 'To the doors! to the doors!'—a survival of the admonition to the door-keepers to see that no catechumen entered." <sup>1</sup>

So scrupulously was this secrecy observed that almost nothing as to the details of the Mysteries is now known. Clement of Alexandria tells us the pass-word of the *mystæ*: "I have fasted, I have drunk the barley-drink, I have taken things from the sacred chest, having tasted thereof I have placed them into the basket, and again from the basket into the chest." We know also that some kind of sacrament was partaken of by the *mystæ*, either as a preliminary condition of admission or as itself part of the mystery: and an archaic vase-painting in Naples, which depicts two *mystæ* seated before a table laden with food, while a priest administers the sacred cup, is undoubtedly the earliest

<sup>1</sup> W. Miller, *Greek Life in Town and Country*, 1905.

representation of the sacrament in European mystic cult. The very fact that this could be represented pictorially, however, proves that it was not a central or secret part of the mystic rites, nor is there any indication that the mystic regarded the food and drink set before him as being the actual substance of the divinity.

Definite religious teaching seems to have formed no part of the Eleusinian cult: the mystic was impressed rather by what he saw, and especially by the display of certain sacred objects (*hiera*) by the hierophant, an official of so sacred a character that it was forbidden to address him by name. "We have every reason," states Dr. Farnell, "to regard the mysteries as in some sense a commemorative harvest festival": and it is probable that a corn-token was among the sacred things exhibited, along with images of the gods, and other objects of a nature calculated to thrill the spectators with feelings of the most intense religious emotion. The symbol by which St. Paul in a famous passage illustrated the mystery of immortality—the ear of corn cast into the ground, and dying that it may be reborn—was almost certainly drawn from the Mysteries of Eleusis, for the resurrection of soul and body was undoubtedly an article of belief among the *mystæ*.

"Happy is he who has beheld the Mysteries," declares the ancient Hymn to Demeter, "but as for him who is not initiated, nor has ever shared in the holy rites, far other shall be his fate after death, in the abode of darkness." Olympiodoros, the commentator on Plato, says:

The object of the initiation is to aid the soul to re-ascend to that goal whence it descended in the beginning, when Dionysos had set it upon his Father's throne. . . . He who is not initiated, remaining utterly remote from his goal, is plunged into the slough (*borboros*), not only in this life, but still more in the other . . . in Tartarus itself. . . .

Thus the initiation seems to have been, as it were, a rehearsal of the transition from this world to the next, and the Mysteries themselves, in part at least, a revelation of the kinship of the initiate with the gods, if not, as some think, an actual mystic marriage of the reborn soul with godhead beyond the grave. Possibly this may have been symbolized in the miracle play which seems to have formed part of the Mysteries, and which, while depicting the rape of Kore by Pluto, and the quest of the bereaved Demeter, apparently terminated in a *ἱερός γάμος* or "sacred marriage" between the hierophant and the priestess. At all events, as Dr. Farnell writes:

the solemn fast and preparation, the mystic food eaten and drunk, the moving passion-play, the extreme sanctity of the *ἱερά* revealed, all these influences could induce in the worshipper, not indeed the sense of absolute union with the divine nature . . . but at least the feeling of intimacy and friendship with the deities. . . . But these deities, the Mother and the Daughter and the dark God in the background, were the powers that governed the world beyond the grave: those who had won their friendship by initiation in this life would, by the simple logic of faith, regard themselves as certain to win blessing at their hands in the next. And this, so far as we can discern, was the ground on which flourished the Eleusinian hope.<sup>1</sup>

The actual details of the initiation are naturally shrouded in the deepest obscurity, but it would seem that the candidate performed a kind of symbolic journey to the other world. Having stripped naked and plunged into mire, symbolizing the slough of matter of which Olympiodoros speaks, he washed and purified himself, and was then conducted by a mystagogue through the further stages of the initiation. We hear of subterranean darkness, of terrifying apparitions, of a tribunal by which the candidate was judged, chastised and finally purified, of an emergence at last from darkness into light.

<sup>1</sup> *Cults of the Greek States*, III, 197.

So to those that go up to the holy celebrations of the Mysteries [writes Plotinus <sup>1</sup>], there are appointed purifications and the laying aside of garments worn before, and the approach in nakedness; until, passing on the upward path that is other than the God, each in the loneliness of himself beholds that lonely-dwelling Being, the Apart, the Single, the Pure, the Being from which all things depend, for Which all look and live and act and know, for that This is the Cause of Life and of Intelligence and of Being. And one that shall know this vision—with what passion of love shall he not be seized, with what pang of desire, what longing to be merged into one with This, what wondering delight?

The site of the Eleusinian sanctuary has now been completely excavated, without, however, discovering the slightest trace either of underground passages or of an inner shrine—*anaktoron* or *megaron*—such as is hinted at by ancient authors. It is possible, as Frazer suggests, that this shrine was simply the great hall itself, concealed from the *mystæ* assembled on the surrounding benches by means of curtains which were suddenly drawn apart, revealing the *hiera* amid a blaze of light—all the more dazzlingly impressive by reason of the preceding darkness. On the other hand, the excavations have revealed extensive evidence of the successive alterations and additions effected to the ancient sanctuary from before the days of Peisistratos down to the second century of our own era, when, enclosed as it was within a massive enceinte of walls and towers, it must have presented a spectacle of striking magnificence. Though nothing is certainly known regarding its final destruction, it was undoubtedly intact so late as A.D. 395, and the celebration of the Mysteries, despite the triumph of Christianity, was prohibited only under Theodosius II. Coming to the actual ruins, we see that the principal entrance faced north-

<sup>1</sup> Plotinus, *Ennead*, I, 6, 7 (Stephen Mackenna, *Plotinos on the Beautiful*, 1908).



east: in front stood a temple of Artemis and Poseidon, while two triumphal arches rose at a little distance respectively to right and left. A broad flight of marble steps climbed to the Ionic portico of the Greater Propylæa, whose pediments were adorned with large medallion portraits of Emperors in high relief. To the left of the Propylæa, one may still see the ancient Well of the Fair Dances beside which had rested the weary Demeter, and round which the women of Eleusis danced to the sound of music.

Beyond a courtyard the pilgrims ascended through the second or Smaller Propylæa. The remains of this inner gateway are flanked on the right by those of a small temple of Pluto, including a grotto perhaps representing the gate of Hades, through which the god had borne the ravished Persephone. Directly ahead, where the processional road ended in an imposing marble stairway, towered the great temple of the Mysteries—an immense hypostyle hall, surrounded by tiers of seats (partly hewn from the rocky side of the hill), and flanked on the south-east by a lofty Doric portico dating from the fourth century B.C. and designed by the same Philo who built the great arsenal at Piræus. Above the temple, on the other side, ran a broad rock terrace, adjoined on the north by a temple dedicated to Sabina, the deceased consort of Hadrian, who had himself been initiated at Eleusis.

The celebration of the Greater Mysteries took place in the month Boedromion (September-October), beginning with the full moon. Five days later, at the hour of sunset, the procession of pilgrims—mystics, priests, *epheboi*, and initiates—passed through the Agora to the temple of Iakchos near the Dipylon, and placing the image of the god on a chariot, set out on foot along the Sacred Way with myrtle-

wreath on head and torch in hand.<sup>1</sup> Like an enormous fiery serpent the long train of torch-bearers wound slowly through the night, halting from time to time at various shrines along the route, and startling the sleeping silence with the mystic chant, "Iakchos! O Iakchos!" At the Rheitoi the procession was met by the inhabitants of Eleusis, whither it arrived usually towards midnight: and one still seems to hear the hymn of thankfulness that must have burst from every weary pilgrim as the light of the leading torches wavered redly over the mighty pillars of the outer Propylæa.

*Thou that dwellest in the shadow  
Of great glory here beside us,  
Spirit, Spirit, we have hied us  
To thy dancing in the meadow!  
Come, Iakchos; let thy brow  
Toss its fruited myrtle-brow;  
We are thine, O happy dancer; O our comrade, come and guide us!  
Let the mystic measure beat;  
Come in riot fiery fleet;  
Free and holy all before thee,  
While the Charites adore thee,  
And thy Mystæ wait the music of thy feet.*

*Spirit, Spirit, lift the shaken  
Splendour of thy tossing torches!  
All the meadow flashes, scorches!  
Up, Iakchos, and awaken!  
Come, thou star that bringest light  
To the darkness of our rite,  
Till thine old men leap as young men, leap with every thought forsaken  
Of the dullness and the fear  
Left by many a circling year;*

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<sup>1</sup> Many people, unable or unwilling to make the journey on foot, followed the procession in carriages. This practice was prohibited by a law proposed by Lykourgos, whose own wife was the first to break it. She was fined 6,000 drachmas, which the unhappy legislator, of course, had to pay.

*Let thy red light guide the dances  
Where thy banded youth advances  
To be joyous by the blossoms of the mere!*<sup>1</sup>

There we must leave them. Yet, as we stand amid the ruins of the great hall, our imagination beats angrily at the dark portals of the past till, for one enchanted instant, we seem to hear the voice of the hierophant intoning the secret formulæ, and the deep chorus of the answering *mystæ*, and the bright sunlight turns of a sudden to the glare of a thousand golden lamps. Strange, half-comprehended visions, instantly darkened or dispersed, shape themselves before our eyes: the hierophant in his gorgeous robes glides by and disappears amid the forest of gleaming columns: the deep clang of copper gongs, the strains of music, wild or solemn, echo in our ears like the memory of a dream. For more than a thousand years the Eleusinian Mysteries were, in large measure, the very palladium of Hellenic religion: and though fifteen centuries have passed since the last hymn was sung or the last worshipper departed, "the shadow of great glory" seems yet to linger upon the empty courts and silent sanctuaries of Eleusis.

<sup>1</sup> Ar., *Frogs* (trans. Professor Gilbert Murray).

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*Note.*—Excavations by Greek archæologists are at present in progress with a view to discovering the precise site of the Academy. Though the actual tomb of Plato—disciple of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle—has not yet been brought to light, the results to date have certainly proved highly stimulating. In addition to an ancient roadway, in good preservation, which is believed to be identical with the road from the Dipylon (p. 84), the finds include the pedestal of a tomb with spirited reliefs on two sides, and an elaborate marble *loutrophoros*. Far more important, however, is the discovery of remains of the foundations of a large building, believed to be the *gymnasion* or college of the Academy—the source and centre of a philosophy which, despite the closing of the college by Justinian in A.D. 529, has never ceased to influence human thought.

## CHAPTER VII

### CORINTH

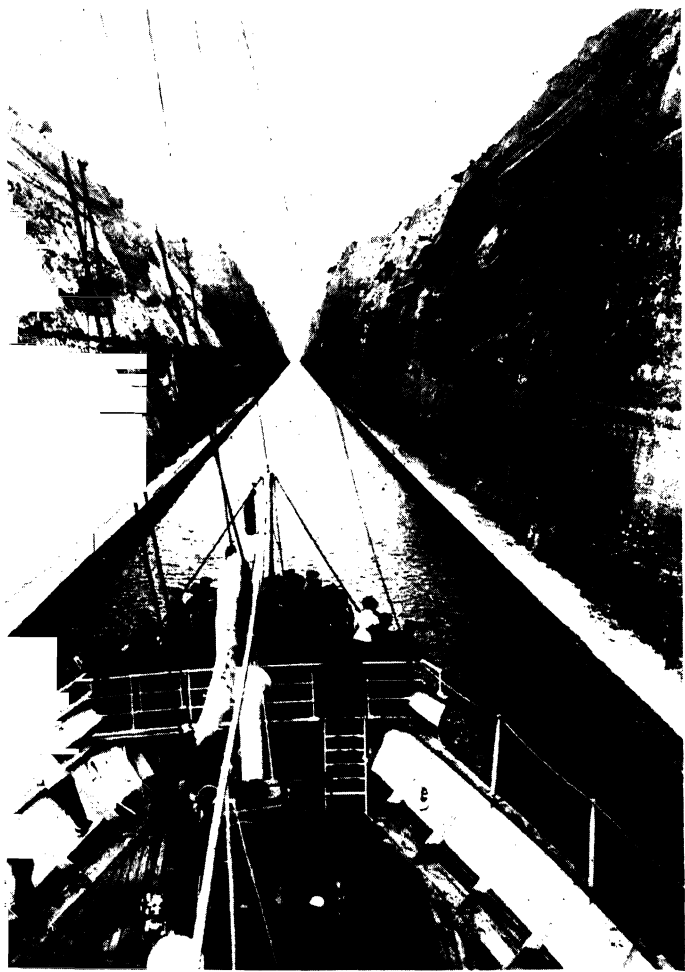
**F**ROM Eleusis to the Isthmus of Corinth road and railway run close to the sea and to each other. Whether one travels by train or motor, the views, especially on a bright sunny morning, are enchantingly beautiful—the sparkling sea in the foreground lapping gently among the reddish-grey rocks, and varying in tone from the most delicate shades of translucent green to the blue of all the sapphires in the world. Against the azure sky the distant mountains of Argolis rise palely blue, or crowned in winter with dazzling snows: while nearer at hand the tawny hills and promontories of Salamis fall back reluctantly behind us after we have passed Megara. Little enough remains to tell us of the days when Megara was a jealous rival of Athens, but the modern town on its hill builds up picturesquely enough. Below, sheltering the small harbour on the east, a low promontory terminates in a hump—once the island of Minoa, a name which tells of Cretan colonization in the remote past. Megara itself was a Dorian city, called by its founders Nisa: but the memory of the palace which had crowned the hill in Mycenaean times still clung about it, and the name of Nisa was unable to hold its own against the older local appellation of Megara, “the palace.” In later times the true origin of the name was forgotten, and hence arose the legend that the town had been the home of Alkathoos, the son of Pelops, who had married the daughter of King Megareus.

A few miles beyond Megara the road, twisting and turning to follow the involutions of the coast, squeezes past the foot of an almost perpendicular cliff known to-day as the Kake Skala. In ancient times these were the famous Skironian Cliffs, where the legendary robber Skiron was in the habit of feeding his pet turtle on passing travellers whom he kicked into the sea from the top, till Theseus, on his way from Athens to Corinth, served him the same way. The narrow pass between the sea and the mountain was always dangerous until Hadrian caused the road to be widened and strengthened by buttresses. Hagios Theodoros, further on, probably represents the ancient town of Krommyon, where Theseus slew a terrible man-eating sow that was devastating the neighbourhood. Here we catch our first glimpse of the Acrocorinth, the huge hill at whose foot lay ancient Corinth, while nearly 40 miles away as the crow flies a great snowy edge lifts above the nearer and lower summits of the Peloponnese. It is Kyllene—now Mount Ziria—the birthplace of Hermes,

*quem candida Maia  
Kyllenæ gelido conceptum vertice fudit.*

To the south a handful of small islands, with the dark mass of Ægina still further in the background, drowse like basking sea-creatures on the tranquil surface of the Saronic Gulf. Ahead of us we now begin to discern the little port of Isthmia, which lies at the entrance of the Corinth Canal. It was somewhere in the neighbourhood of Isthmia that Theseus overcame the cruel robber Sinis, who murdered his victims by fastening them to two pine-trees, which he bent down for the purpose and then allowed to spring violently apart.

We seem to be moving in faery-tale country, as indeed



*Photo. F.N.I.*

CORINTH—THE CANAL THROUGH THE ISTHMUS.



we are. Not only is Greece the oldest of all Faery-lands, but for the Greek peasant at least the age of faery-tales has never come to an end. For him vampires and witches still pursue their unhallowed activities, and by grove and stream, or in the desolate solitudes of the high hills, the nymphs—"the maidens" or "good mistresses," in the deprecatory terms of popular parlance—still weave their mysterious dances. No mortal woman can rival their unearthly beauty, sing with such surpassing sweetness, weave and spin so skilfully and swiftly.

Many have seen their merry revels of a moonlit night on the level space of the threshing floor, and often the shepherds in the mountains have perceived that they were not piping in solitude, but that mystic dancers were keeping time to the notes of the reed-pipe, flitting among the shadows of the pines.<sup>1</sup>

"Milk and honey be in thy path!" murmurs the peasant, bowing his head as the unseen Maidens sweep by him on the road in a sudden scurry and eddy of wind and dust. One must indeed be careful to placate them, for they are often as malicious as they are beautiful. At noon-tide above all they are apt to take vengeance on anyone who invades their haunts: on the summit of Mount Hymettos, for example, they are well known to frequent a certain small round space which the local shepherds are careful to avoid. An English student of Greek folk-lore had one actually pointed out to him one evening by his terrified muleteer; "and there certainly was the semblance of a female figure draped in white and tall beyond human stature flitting in the dusk between the gnarled and twisted boles of an old olive-yard."<sup>2</sup> Yet for all the fear which they inspire, a bold man can occasionally master one of

<sup>1</sup> Rennell Rodd, *Customs and Lore of Modern Greece*, 1892.

<sup>2</sup> J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folk-lore and Modern Greek Religion*.



them, and even make her his bride, if he can snatch and hide part of her garments, especially one of the long floating veils which they invariably carry in their flower-garlanded revels. A family of the village of Menidhi, only a few miles north of Athens, is firmly believed to be descended from such a union.

Leaving the Saronic Gulf behind us, we now traverse the barren and undulating tract which forms the greater part of the Isthmus, and draw up in the middle of the bridge which spans the canal at a height of nearly 200 feet. As we look down, it is as though some Titan had severed the four miles of earth and rock with a single blow of his mighty sword, whose blade, glitteringly blue as a peacock's neck-feathers, lies still half-buried in the wound. The effect of height is perhaps even more impressive from the deck of a steamer, the huge walls of rock seeming to tower almost perpendicularly above the ship. The holes and crannies of the cliffs are the haunts in summer of innumerable owls, and towards evening it is amusing to observe husband and wife sitting placidly side by side in the doorway of their home, and surveying the passing vessel below with nephelococcygian detachment.

The present canal is the inheritor of unfulfilled renown. As early as the seventh century B.C. its construction was proposed, and actually begun by the Kypselid tyrants of Corinth—probably in emulation of the canal made by Necho of Egypt connecting the Nile with the Red Sea. But the tyrant of a Greek city could not command the resources in men and money which were at the disposal of an Egyptian Pharaoh, and the scheme quickly came to an end. For centuries ships were towed over the Isthmus on a kind of tramway, and the fleet of Augustus was thus transported after the battle of Actium in his pursuit of

Antony and Cleopatra. Both Julius Cæsar and Augustus toyed with the idea of constructing a canal, and the work was actually inaugurated by Nero in person, wielding a golden pick, but the operations had hardly begun ere they were interrupted by the first outbreak of the revolt which ended in Nero's flight and suicide. In the following century Hadrian again contemplated a resumption of the scheme, but nothing was done, and it was only in 1881-93 that the two gulfs were finally united at a cost of nearly two and a half millions sterling. Even then, however, the canal was not rendered practicable for any save small coastal steamers and sailing craft till 1907.

Save for its name, modern Corinth has nothing—not even its site—in common with its illustrious ancestor. The ramshackle little town, built chiefly of lath and plaster, and showing only too plainly the ravages of the earthquakes which rack it like an intermittent fever from time to time, is anything but attractive, and in fact is little more than a good-sized village. Escaping as rapidly as may be from its atmosphere of poverty and decay, we drive on in the direction of Acrocorinth, on whose tawny heights are discernible the remains of the great medieval fortress which replaced the early citadel, and finally draw up under the shadow of an enormous plane-tree in the centre of a little village. Close by, at the fountain, a group of women, their black headscarfs flung across their mouths, are leisurely filling their water-pots, while lean pigs, bearded, onyx-eyed goats, and curs of unmistakably Ishmaelitic ancestry pursue their respective avocations with an air of cynical disillusion.<sup>1</sup> Like a beggar in his rags the little village sits

<sup>1</sup> So far as the goats are concerned, such an attitude is explicable enough. Only in Greece have I seen the males of the species wearing bags—not the Oxford variety, but simple squares of sacking suspended

at the entrance to what was once the Paris of the ancient world. Diogenes, who lived at Corinth because, he declared, more fools passed that way than anywhere else in Greece, must even so have squatted in his famous "tub"—really a large jar or *pithos*—in the fashionable suburb of Kraneon, where he was visited by Alexander the Great. "Tell me what I can do for you," asked the young monarch in whose hands lay the destiny of the world. "You can stand out of the sunlight," replied the philosopher.

Until a comparatively few years ago the only visible sign of the ancient city was the group of hoary columns of the temple of Apollo which still form the most conspicuous feature of the ruins. The excavations—still in progress—of the American School have now brought to light the most important section of the city, or rather of two cities: the Corinth of Greek times, originating perhaps in the Mycenaean age, whose mighty walls—so high and thick that a Spartan on seeing them was moved to scorn for the "women" who stood in need of such protection—could not save her from being wiped out of existence by the Romans under Mummius in 146 B.C.; and the new Corinth founded by Cæsar a hundred years later, which rapidly became the richest and most luxurious city in all Greece. Nearly 5 miles in circumference, it was laid out in terraces and gardens, enclosed in marble colonnades and adorned with monuments and statues. Splendid baths, a

beneath their middles. This singular adornment bears a whimsical resemblance to a bishop's apron, but "*nolo episcopari*" would probably be a very mild expression of the feelings of the hircine wearer. They are, in fact, comparable to the famous *ceintures de la chasteté* in the Musée Cluny, and indignant feminists may derive consolation from reflecting that in Greece at any rate the tyranny of the medieval male has met with an appropriate punishment.

large theatre, a fine concert hall, provided amusement for citizens and strangers alike, and innumerable fountains sparkled in the sunlight, and filled the air with their refreshing murmur. The water-supply was greatly improved by Hadrian, who constructed an aqueduct from the distant springs of Stymphalos in Arcadia. Her position astride of the Isthmus—*bimaris Corinthus*—made her one of the leading commercial centres of the Empire, and her two harbours—Lechaion and Kenchreai—on the gulfs of Corinth and Argos respectively were crowded with vessels from every corner of the Mediterranean. According to Strabo, who lived under Augustus and Tiberius, the slave population alone in his day numbered nearly half a million. High up on the Acrocorinth, hundreds of sacred prostitutes took part in the services of the temple of Aphrodite, whose statue represented the goddess nude to the waist, and gazing at her charms reflected in a polished mirror. There were more than a thousand of these “hospitable damsels,” as they were euphemistically called, and such were their charms that many a ship-captain practically ruined himself for the sake of their embraces. No wonder that a proverb was current—“Tis not for every man to visit Corinth!”

The broad street we tread on passing the entrance to the excavations was the busiest, probably, in all the city. It was, in fact, the main avenue from Lechaion, the harbour on the Corinthian Gulf: and one easily pictures the bustling, chattering crowd that must have filled it from morning till night—the sweating porters with their burdens, crying “By your leave!” the dark-eyed cocottes in their cushioned litters, the elegant young men idling with gossip and laughter along the pavements, the alert tradesmen, in their short, sleeveless tunics, bawling from their doorways. Here at the corner a bearded philosopher in his shabby cloak leans on

his crutched stick, oblivious of all things but the scroll on which he is poring: here a small slave, with a tray of eatables from the cook-shop in one hand and a pitcher of wine in the other, stubs his toe in his haste and sprawls headlong: here a Roman officer strides past, very smart in his uniform, and perfectly aware of the two pretty girls peeping at him from behind the curtains of an upper window. Making his way through the crowd comes a short, slightly bow-legged figure, his worn travelling-cloak stained with salt of the sea, and his fierce eyes under their shaggy brows roaming with all the contempt of a Jew and a fanatic over the gay, noisy scene, and especially the lofty colonnade of the Basilica soaring above the shops on the right, and the glittering bronze steeds rearing in air above the triumphal arch at the end of the street. He stops for a moment to address a kindly word to the blubbering little slave, and his stern features light up in a smile of curiously compelling charm. His name, as we learn from his companion, is Paul, of Tarsus. . . .

But let us return to the twentieth century! The shops which St. Paul saw are still here, on the right of the street, each with a small waterproof tank in the little window on either side of the door. Possibly they were fishmongers' shops, and the tanks were used for keeping fish in. Above them a broad terrace, reached by stairways, fronted the Basilica, erected towards the end of the first century B.C., and not improbably the scene of Paul's appearance before Gallio, who "cared for none of these things." How clearly one seems to behold the excited wranglings of the Jewish disputants, and the bored impatience of the cultured Roman official! Beneath the Roman building are remains of the market of the earlier Greek city: on the opposite side of the street one sees the foundations of a small Greek temple,

dating apparently from the fifth century B.C., which had likewise been built over during the Empire. Immediately behind the later structures are the remains of a marble Ionic colonnade, which probably enclosed a formal garden. It has been identified with the *peribolos* of Apollo, mentioned by Pausanias, who says that it contained a bronze statue of the god and a painting of Odysseus slaying the suitors.

As the remains of steps indicate, the Lechaion road was impassable for wheeled traffic, and all goods to or from the harbour must therefore have been carried on the backs of porters or pack-animals. Of the triumphal arch leading to the Agora of the Roman city, only the foundations remain: not a trace has been found of the gilt-bronze quadriga of Helios and Phæthon which surmounted the arch in the time of Pausanias. To the east of the arch is the famous fountain of Peirene, the unhappy daughter of Œbalos, king of Sparta, who melted into tears at the loss of her son. Legend told how Pegasus was in the act of drinking at the fountain when he was caught by Bellerophon, while a variant of the myth declared that the water first gushed forth from a hoof-stroke of the magic steed. It was the most celebrated of all Greek city-fountains, and an epitaph on the famous courtesan, *Lais*, whose tomb at Corinth seems to have been in the form of a Doric column supporting a lioness above a prostrate ram, says that her beauty was even brighter than the clear drops of Peirene.

In pre-Roman days the area in front of the fountain-house seems to have been a simple open square raised a few steps above the level of the water, and, not long before the destruction of the city, bordered on the east by a narrow stoa in Doric style. With the founding of the new city a complete transformation took place. An open-air foun-

tain was constructed in the centre of the courtyard, and a broad channel carried along it on three sides, delivering water through eleven or more spouts. In the second century A.D. Herodes Atticus—most probably—carried out a further remodelling of the whole area. The fountain-basin itself was shortened by the insertion of four broad steps opposite the fountain-house, and, in addition to other alterations, large apses were built on three sides of the court, with niches containing statues. The base of one of these statues has been found, inscribed with a dedication by the Corinthians to Herodes' wife, Annia Regilla, whose untimely death afforded a welcome opportunity for scandal-mongering to Herodes' enemies.

It requires a good deal of imagination to visualize the Agora as it must have been under the Empire, with its numerous statues in marble and bronze, and its handsome buildings enclosing it on all sides, and looking down on the great open space—crowded, probably, on market days with scores of awninged stalls. It was not a single broad area, but was divided into two levels: the lower level sloping gently upwards from the triumphal arch to the east end and extending along the north, while the upper formed a terrace 100 feet in width along the south, where it was bounded by a long stoa, only in part excavated: on the west it was slightly wider. At the east end, in the direction of Kraneon, have been uncovered the porous foundations of a large building, which seems to have consisted of a large roofed hall surrounded by a Corinthian portico.

Almost immediately to the right of the arch, as one enters from the Lechaion road, are the remains of the high-stepped base of a Roman wall, once supporting a two-storied façade of Parian marble. At least four of the columns in the upper story were in the form of colossal

statues <sup>1</sup> of captive barbarians, standing on bases carved with scenes symbolical of victory, and the whole structure has therefore been called the "Captives Façade." It formed a mask, as it were, concealing a rectangular court which lay between it and the end of the Basilica.

Just beyond the western end of the Captives Façade we come upon a low wall carved with triglyphs and metopes. Running from N.N.E. to S.S.W. and then turning abruptly due west, it is a work of the fifth century B.C., and in Roman times was entirely covered over by the northern level of the Agora. It was formerly surmounted by tripods and statues, and a base of black Eleusinian limestone was found near the western end of the south wing bearing the signature of the famous sculptor Lysippos—the only sculptor to whom Alexander accorded the privilege of making his portrait. Beyond the wall, and likewise buried under the foundations of the Roman shops on the north side of the Agora, are the remains of a little apsidal shrine containing a small round altar—probably earlier than the temple itself, and enclosed within a circular stone kerb, whose original height is now impossible to estimate.

Close beside the temple, on the east, the excavators made an interesting and amusing discovery. Here there appeared, side by side, a water-channel and a narrow tunnel, the latter just large enough for a man to crawl through on his hands and knees. The channel had its exit in the triglyph wall, and we can still see the spout in the metope, and the stone bowl into which the water flowed. The tunnel, on the other hand, proved to be a genuine secret passage. It too terminates, or rather begins, in the triglyph wall, the door being carefully disguised to look like an ordinary metope. To prevent inquisitive persons from approaching

<sup>1</sup> Now in the local museum.



too closely, notices were set up in ancient times warning the public that trespassers would be fined: a stele inscribed to that effect in fifth-century lettering was actually found close by, beside the kerb of a street formerly leading up to the temple of Apollo.

Naturally such secrecy was incompatible with locks and bolts on the exterior of the sham metope, but judging by the grooves in the passage wall there was an inner door, probably of wood, which no doubt was kept carefully secured. At the other end of the passage, below the temple, is a funnel-shaped hole, through which a priest concealed in the passage may well have imitated the voice of the oracle for the benefit of the deluded worshippers above. Odd to think of this hoary bit of priestly trickery escaping detection for twenty-three centuries, only to be brought to light at last !

A few yards south of the secret passage is another opening in the triglyph wall: it gives upon a staircase which, from the unworn condition of the steps, seems to have been used solely by the temple attendants. At the bottom is an underground chamber enclosing what was clearly a spring of peculiar sanctity. The bronze lions' heads through which the water flowed are still in place: they were almost certainly set up in the fifth century B.C., when the fountain area was still open to the air and light. Later on, the surrounding ground-level was raised, and the area converted into a crypt, which was at length walled up entirely when the fountain had finally ceased to flow. In this way—luckily for us—it escaped the attentions of Cæsar's freedmen settlers, who sifted the ruins of the old city for statues and bronzes to sell in the markets of Rome.

The north, or north-western, boundary of the Agora was formed by a long row of shops, whose massive walls suggest that they once supported an upper story. The

central shop, with its high stone vaulting, was evidently unique in this respect, since the walls of the rest are not built to withstand the thrust of an arch. A colonnade in front protected shoppers from sun or rain, while at the back are the remains of an earlier Greek stoa—repaired and utilized for other purposes in Roman times—which once faced the street. Traces of the podium of a small temple of late date have been found at the south-western end of the row of shops. On the west of the Agora were more shops, fronted by a portico in modified Corinthian style, while south of these the concrete foundations of a monumental stairway lead to a Roman temple with a high podium, which may have been the temple of the Capitoline Triad. At the other or northern end of this row of shops is a large sacred precinct, with remains of a temple, dating probably from the first century A.D.

The most conspicuous object in this direction, however, is a ruin of somewhat curious appearance, which on closer inspection reveals itself as being almost entirely carved out of the living rock. This is the fountain of Glauke, named from the maiden to wed whom Jason deserted Medea. The angry sorceress, by way of revenge, sent her rival a wedding-robe which burst into a blaze when put on, and Glauke, in a vain effort to quench the consuming flames, flung herself into the fountain. Fed by an aqueduct, it had four large reservoirs, with three draw-basins in front, and was originally entered through a portico of three square pillars between *antæ* supporting a vaulted stone ceiling. On the destruction of the aqueduct the fountain was converted in the Middle Ages into a two-storied house and basement, whose inmates were actually compelled to dig a well in the floor in order to obtain water for their daily needs. It is interesting that terra-cotta models of fountains

closely resembling that of Glauke have recently been found in the island of Lemnos, where they belong to a period certainly not later than the sixth century B.C.

Further to the north-west are the remains of an Odeon, presented to the city by Herodes Atticus, of the theatre, and of a shrine perhaps to be identified with that of Athena Chalinitis, "the Bridler," which Pausanias mentions as being "beside the theatre." "For they say," he adds, "that Athena above all the gods helped Bellerophon in his exploits, and that in particular she handed over to him Pegasus, tamed and bridled with her own hands."

By far the most picturesque of all Corinth's remains is the temple of Apollo, whose seven worn columns stand together on the rocky platform like the last survivors of a defeated army. In view of the fact that a number of Mycenaean villages have been identified within a 7-mile radius, it has been suggested that the temple, like the Erechtheion, occupies the site of a Mycenaean palace. To judge from the form of the Doric capitals and the close spacing of the columns, it is certainly one of the oldest temples in Greece. There is good ground for assigning it to the reign of Periander, the son of Kypselos, and the most powerful and enlightened of the tyrants who ruled Corinth in the sixth century B.C.

The temple consisted of a double cella, enclosed within a colonnade to which the seven columns with their architrave belonged. In the first chamber of the cella was the cult image of the god: the second, where remains of a sort of strong-box were found in the pavement, was probably used as a treasury. Centuries of exposure have eaten deep holes in the limestone columns, which were once coated with stucco. The invention of roofing-tiles at Corinth in the seventh century B.C. enabled architects to give a much

steeper inclination to the roofs of their buildings than had formerly been practicable. This resulted in a large triangular space in each gable—nowadays known as the pediment, but called by the Greeks the “eagle” (*ætos*).<sup>1</sup>

The temple of Apollo was already three centuries old when another tyrant took refuge at Corinth. This was the younger Dionysios of Syracuse, the great city which Corinthian colonists had founded in far-off Sicily, and which his father had made for a time the wealthiest and most powerful city in Europe. Driven from his throne, Dionysios spent the remainder of his days in the ancient city of Periander, where he gained as a wit the reputation which he had lost as a ruler.

It was a glorious day in summer when I first visited Corinth. As I ate my lunch in the shadow of the ancient columns, the exhumed city lay at my feet, the towering mass of Acrocorinth lifted hugely against the sky, while to the north, beyond the distant bay, extended the long promontory of Perachora, where the British School has recently excavated part of a very ancient sanctuary of Hera. Three feet away, a couple of peasants slumbered peacefully, their hats over their eyes, stretched at full length on the sun-warmed stone and obviously quite indifferent to the ants, which would hardly permit me even to sit. There appeared to be two species of these insects—one large, the other small: and in the intervals of raiding me and my sandwiches they waged war on one another as ruthlessly as

dragons of the prime  
That tare each other in the slime.

Whenever a large ant encountered a small one, he fell upon him with the ferocious joy of a terrier attacking a

<sup>1</sup> *Vide infra*, pp. 173-4.

rat. Woe betide him, however, if, as sometimes happened, the victim's comrades rushed to the rescue! Feeling like a spectator in the Colosseum, I watched the original aggressor unexpectedly beset by a ravening pack of small black devils who did their earnest best to tear him in pieces. Snapping, writhing, rolling over and over, half-buried under a swarm of enemies, the bully at length took to flight, with one indomitable imp still implacably clamped to one of his hinder legs. Corinth, it seemed, was no longer healthy for tyrants.

## CHAPTER VIII

### IN THE ARGOLID

FROM Corinth to Mycenæ the road runs southward, first skirting the foot of the Acrocorinth, and then winding among the mountains of the Argolid, whose rocky slopes are occasionally lightened by wide stretches of purple heather, as though one had been suddenly transported to some Scottish glen. In spring-time every wayside stream is gay with fluttering anemones, where a month or two later only the hot scarlet blossoms of the laurel flaunt their dusty finery above the parching stones and sand. It is a lonely land. Seldom indeed does one pass a village or even a house: and only at infrequent intervals does one meet a peasant seated sideways on his donkey—invariably greeting one with a courteous “Yassou!” (your health!) or “Kalo taxeithi!” (pleasant journey)!—or catch a glimpse of some solitary shepherd with his long crook and heavy cloak of black or brown wool, his motley flock grazing about him.

Although Greek roads in general are now rapidly undergoing a considerable improvement, one is still frequently reminded, not without a sigh, of the words of Strabo that “whereas the Greeks . . . had considered only the beauty of a site, its defensive strength, or its vicinity to a port, the Romans applied themselves above all to doing what the Greeks had neglected, i.e. *the making of roads*, aqueducts and sewers.” Prior to Roman times, at least, travel in

Greece can seldom have been undertaken for pleasure. Where practicable, it was usually preferable to go by sea, though even so, with no cabin accommodation and almost no privacy, the discomfort, judged by modern standards, must have been appalling. By land, the ordinary traveller usually went afoot or on horseback, with his baggage on a mule or donkey led by a slave. Litters were not introduced until Hellenistic times, and even then chiefly for the use of invalids: and women or elderly men had therefore no more luxurious conveyance than a springless cart, sometimes provided with a hood, and with cushions laid on the floor in lieu of seats. Brigands, too, frequently infested the roads: while to fatigue and danger must be added the miseries of the inns in which the traveller was forced to spend the night. They were frequently disreputable<sup>1</sup> and invariably verminous, whence Dionysos's query in the *Frogs* as to which inns on his way to Hades had "the fewest bugs"—a joke which has by no means lost its point even to-day. As for meals, nothing but the most simple fare was obtainable: if the traveller desired anything further, his only resource was to purchase the raw material in the market and have it cooked for him, either by the inn-keeper or by his own slave. A Greek inn thus resembled the Arab *fondouk* of Tunisia or Algeria, whose name indeed is said to be directly derived from the Greek *pandocheion* (inn).

To avoid the inn was sometimes to run more serious risks. Plutarch tells us of some Peloponnesian envoys, with their wives and children, who stopped for the night

<sup>1</sup> That Roman inns were no better is evident from the famous inscription found at Isernia (Mommson, *Inscr. Neap.* 5078). The traveller is represented as settling his bill, in which, along with such items as bread and wine, one *as* (a penny), fodder for mule, two *asses*, occurs the entry, *puella, asses octo*.

at Megara on the way to Delphi, but elected to sleep in their carts. Thereupon some of the Megarians, flown with insolence and wine, seized the carts during the night, and rolled them with their unfortunate occupants into a neighbouring pond.<sup>1</sup>

In ancient times, doubtless, when they were the sole means of communication by land, there was much more traffic on the roads than there is to-day. Packmen with their mules trudged from village to village, peddling their wares to the goodwives—paints or perfumery, hardware, mercery or toys. Merchants jogged on their way to the big fairs at Corinth, Delphi or Olympia. Envoys on a mission to some foreign state, soldiers homeward bound or seeking employment, pilgrims journeying to some shrine or sanctuary, sun-browned country-folk and their asses, the latter laden with stuff for the local market—all these and many others filled the now silent highways with life and activity. Mountebanks of all kinds and both sexes—jugglers, rope-dancers and conjurers—likewise wandered from place to place, “wherever money and fools were to be found,” as Xenophon declared scornfully: and Alkiphron tells of a conjurer whose uncanny ability to produce small objects from ears, heads and noses startled a rustic among the spectators into exclaiming, “Defend me from letting that fellow into my farmyard—there wouldn’t be a thing left!”

Leaving at last the hills behind us, we emerge upon the wide Argive plain, and perceive far away to the south the lofty citadel of Argos. To our left a steep hill stands at the mouth of a gorge between two great mountain-masses, like a lion at the entrance to his den. The chauffeur waves an arm, and exclaims dramatically, “Mycenæ!”

<sup>1</sup> H. L. Lorimer, *The Country Cart of Ancient Greece*, J.H.S., XXIII.



Even in ancient times the ruins of Mycenæ were celebrated as a showplace. In the Homeric poems, which describe the Bronze Age in its last stages, when the great civilization emanating from Minoan Crete had already passed away, and the new civilization of classical Greece lay still in the future, Mycenæ had been the "well-built" seat, "rich in gold," of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, the greatest of all the Achæan princes and leader of the host against Troy. Here legend laid the scene of his murder, on his return, by his faithless consort, Klytemnestra, and her paramour, Aigistheus, and of the slaying of the guilty pair by Agamemnon's son, Orestes—legend which "may correspond to historic fact, of a date not earlier than the early part of the fifteenth century B.C." <sup>1</sup> For centuries the Lion Gate—built, it was said, by seven Cyclopes from Lycia—the tombs of the murdered "King of Men" and of others of his clan, the treasury constructed by his sire, Atreus,<sup>2</sup> were pointed out to the wondering tourists of the Greco-Roman world.

In 1876 Schliemann, fresh from his discoveries at Troy, excavated the large mound then to be seen within the Gate of the Lions, and found five graves, in the form of shafts hewn perpendicularly in the rock. A sixth grave was discovered some years later by the Greek Archæological Society. These graves contained the bones of seventeen persons in all, together with an astounding quantity of treasure, chiefly in gold, which is now in the National Museum at Athens. Above the graves were nine stelæ, several of them crudely sculptured with scenes of war or the chase, while enclosing

<sup>1</sup> Evans, *The Ring of Nestor*, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> He is identified by many authorities nowadays with the Atarissijas, king of the Achchivaja, who is mentioned in Hittite records as attacking Caria and Cyprus in the thirteenth century B.C.



*Photo. E.N.I.*

MYCENÆ: THE LION GATE AND THE GRAVE CIRCLE.



the whole was the double fence of stone slabs which, still existing, was originally filled with earth and roofed with other slabs. The stone-encircled mound was doubtless that which was shown to ancient travellers as the tomb of Agamemnon and his kindred: and Schliemann, naturally enough, took the same view. That the graves were royal is indisputable, for with none but kings would have been buried the wonderful cups and goblets, the diadems, rings and girdles, the golden masks laid upon the faces of the dead—whether to keep out evil spirits or to prevent the ghost from troubling the living—which possibly show us their actual features.

What neither Schliemann nor any of his contemporaries were then aware of was the existence of the great Mediterranean civilization before the coming of the Greeks. Had they done so, they must instantly have recognized the “overwhelmingly Minoan character” of the relics. Apart from the oldest grave of all—the sixth—the objects in which, according to Professor H. R. Hall,<sup>1</sup> are definitely imported Cretan work of the Third Middle Minoan period (1900–1700 B.C.), they were, of course, not all of actual Cretan workmanship. “Some, doubtless . . . were made at Mycenæ itself, and occasional divergences from the prototypes mark an incipient ‘colonial’ style, such as is characteristic of later Mycenaean art.”<sup>2</sup> For the founding of Mycenæ, therefore, we must go back, not to the Homeric Age, but to an age before Greece was yet Greek, when wasp-waisted colonists from Crete landed on the shores of Argolis, bringing with them the art and religion of a world whose very memory was lost by the Greeks of history.

The Minoan invaders, however, were not the first

<sup>1</sup> *The Civilization of Greece in the Bronze Age*, 1923.

<sup>2</sup> Evans, *The Shaft Graves and Beehive Tombs of Mycenæ*, 1929.

inhabitants of the hill-side. The shaft-graves are made on the site of an older cemetery, and on the slope above are numerous remains of houses in which the unknown predecessors of the Minoans perhaps dwelt. The walls of some of these houses are still standing to a height of about 6 feet, built of small rough stones bonded with clay, and devoid of either door or window. From such Gotham-like structures one can only deduce that they were originally surmounted by an upper story reached by a wooden ladder, the lower story being used—as is shown by the ashes, potsherds and bones of animals found therein—simply as a midden. So curious a form of dwelling-place has led the Greek archæologist, Tsountas, to formulate a theory that the builders were originally a northern people, accustomed to living in huts raised on piles above swamps or lakes, such as have left numerous traces in Germany, Switzerland and northern Italy, and described by Herodotos as still lingering in Pæonia down to the fifth century B.C.

Opinion is still divided as to whether the great Gate of the Lions was erected in the heyday of Minoan power, or whether, along with the whole of the existing fortifications, it is roughly contemporary with the final destruction of the mother-city, Knossos—wrought, as some believe, by the revolted Mycenæans themselves. In any event, its effect is truly tremendous, nor is it impaired by the fact that the two great beasts have lost their heads, which were made of separate pieces—probably of bronze—and faced, sentinel-like, towards those approaching the gate. Such mighty masses of stone—the monolith forming the lintel is over 16 feet long and 8 feet across—remind the beholder, not of any Greek work, but of the colossal enterprises carried out in Egypt or Assyria by armies of toiling slaves. The design of the great pediment also suggests a non-Hellenic

origin. The downward-tapering pillar, the impost of whose capital clearly represents a timber architrave with roof-beams of unhewn trunks and planks above to complete the roof, finds obvious parallels in the palace of Knossos: while the motive of the pillar with supporting lions appears also in the architecture of Lycia, whence the Cyclopean masons were said to have come. But it is no mere ornament. The pillar is the aniconic form of the great Minoan goddess, the *potnia therōn* or Mistress of the Wild Creatures: and here in her most primitive aspect she stands, guardian of the gate, her attendant lions ready to seize and rend such enemies of her city who might have the hardihood to draw nigh. Within the palace, which was also her shrine, the goddess was doubtless also revered in human form. A curious female head, almost life-size, in painted limestone, which is exhibited in the Mycenean room of the National Museum, was formerly taken for the head of a sphinx. This assumption has now been shown to be incorrect, and it is more than probable that we have here the actual image of the goddess.

The summit of the hill is occupied by the remains of the palace, though unhappily the southern end has been swept away in a landslide. A flight of steps led up to a broad court, with a kind of porticoed ante-chamber at the east end. Beyond this one passed into the megaron or Great Hall, reserved for the king and his followers: the floor, adorned by a chequer pattern, was of concrete with a stone border, while the walls, likewise coated with concrete, were gay with painting. In the centre of the hall four columns, supporting a louver to allow the smoke to escape, enclosed the circular clay hearth, whose remains still bear traces of its painted stucco decoration. Beside it stood probably the royal throne. Though the megaron itself seems to have

been closed only by a curtain, doors and door-jambs generally were of wood, with thresholds of stone. In one doorway we can still see the polished arc made on the stone sill by the swinging door perhaps three thousand five hundred years ago: and for a moment the ruined palace seems suddenly and uncannily alive.

The Lion Gate was not the only entrance to, or at any rate the only exit from, the citadel, for there is a well-preserved postern on the north, so arranged that the warriors as they sallied forth presented their shielded left side to the enemy. Further on a secret stairway in the thickness of the wall descended to a reservoir fed by a spring. Thus, in case of siege, the garrison was always assured of a supply of water.

By whose hand fell Mycenæ at last? None can say for certain: fire swept through her halls, and the palace at least never again rose from its ashes. Probably it was the Dorian invasion in the eleventh century that brought both Tiryns and Mycenæ to a common subjection to the new lords who made their citadel at Argos. Not for six centuries did the two cities for one brilliant moment regain their independence after the crushing defeat of the Argives by the Spartans in 494 B.C. The remains of a Doric temple erected above the long-forgotten palace are almost the sole memorial of the glorious days when the men of Mycenæ and Tiryns fought shoulder to shoulder at Plataea against the Persian hordes, and the names of both cities were engraved on the column of the famous Tripod which the Plataeans offered in thanksgiving to Delphic Apollo. But the set-back of Argos was only temporary, and in 486 both Mycenæ and Tiryns were reduced to ruins, and their hapless inhabitants sold into slavery.

Remains of the prehistoric city strew the rocky hill-sides

below the citadel in every direction. Literally scores of tombs have been found, whose contents tell us much as to the lives and beliefs of those who were laid within them. In one tomb a perfume bottle was discovered, its clay stopper still in place: on being opened, a ghostly fragrance lingered for an instant on the air, "as when a queen, long dead, was young." But grimmer associations are not wanting, for before the threshold of one tomb were found six skeletons, probably of slaves or prisoners, all of whom had evidently been buried at the same time that the spirits of the slaughtered men might serve the tomb's owner in the next world.<sup>1</sup>

This, of course, was no humble sepulchre. It was one of the seven great *tholoi* or "beehive" tombs—so called from their shape—of which the most remarkable is that usually, though, of course, quite erroneously, known nowadays as the "tomb of Agamemnon," and explained in earlier times as the treasury of Atreus. It is amazingly impressive. A broad *dromos* or avenue, cut deep into the hill-side, and lined with stone, leads to the entrance portal, nearly 18 feet high. Its flanking columns of green marble, carved with chevrons and spirals, are now in the British Museum, the bases alone being left *in situ*. The opening above the doorway was once filled with a triangular carved slab, comparatively thin—as at the Gate of the Lions—to reduce the weight. But it is the lintel of the doorway that takes away one's breath. Of the two immense stone blocks of which it is composed, the inner and longer is nearly 30 feet long and over 16 feet across, and has been estimated to weigh 113 tons.

Passing in through this astounding portal, one finds one-

<sup>1</sup> One is reminded of the holocaust at the tomb of Prince Mes-Kal-Em-Dug, discovered by Mr. Leonard Woolley (*Ur of the Chaldees*, Benn, 1930).



self in a large circular underground chamber, its walls narrowing gradually towards the top till they are lost in the darkness. They were once decorated with bronze rosettes, and some of the bronze nails for attaching them have actually been found still in position. Opening out of this first chamber is another, smaller and of rectangular form, whose walls were originally lined with slabs of alabaster. A depression or niche in the floor has been supposed to mark the site of the grave. A theory of great interest,<sup>1</sup> however, is that the supposed tomb, together with the remaining *tholoi*, was actually a shrine; that the two chambers represented respectively the megaron and the bedchamber of the goddess; and that the depression in the floor of the inner room merely marks where once the image of the goddess stood.

Most archæologists, however, are at one in regarding the great *tholoi* simply as tombs, and royal tombs at that. The enormous superiority in construction displayed by the beehive tombs, and the fact that practically nothing was found within them as against the mass of relics discovered in the shaft graves, naturally raise the question as to whether the shaft-graves or the beehive tombs are the older of the two. Mr. A. J. B. Wace, in particular, still upholds the older belief in the priority of the shaft-graves, which he assigns to an age well within the period of Knossian hegemony, while the *tholoi*, in his opinion, represent the high-water mark of Mycenean power which followed the fall of Knossos. It is, however, difficult to resist the theory put forward by Sir Arthur Evans, who, on the contrary, compares the great monumental style of the *tholoi* with the great monumental style of Crete between 1900 and 1700 B.C. His

<sup>1</sup> J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*, 1910.

theory is that the *tholoi* were originally built to contain the relics, including the stelæ, found in the shaft-graves, to which those relics were transferred for safety at some subsequent period of crisis. The sixth shaft-grave, which is admittedly the oldest of the group, and which, unlike the crowded condition of the others, shows us an orderly burial with a subsequent interment above it, he regards as contemporary with the *tholoi*. "That the mortal remains of a scion of the conquering race should already have been laid here, may have supplied an additional reason for the gathering round of the remains and relics of the representatives of other princely and royal families," whose abandoned monuments, however, probably continued to be employed for memorial rites.

From Mycenæ a road led southwards to a small hill, near which three more beehive tombs have been found, showing that it was a place of some importance. Probably it was a sanctuary of some kind, for in later times it became the site of the great Heraion, the temple and sanctuary of Hera, which formed the religious centre of the entire Argolid. The conquering Argives enshrined in the temple an extremely ancient wooden image of the goddess which they had carried off after the fall of Tiryns. The ruins of the Heraion were excavated by the American School towards the end of the last century.

Argos itself, which has never ceased to be inhabited since its foundation, is nowadays an unprepossessing town dominated by the lofty mass of its Acropolis—now occupied by a medieval citadel. Apart from the theatre, which has recently been more completely excavated, it possesses few relics of its past. Some miles further on, as we skirt the shore of the gulf of Argos, a low eminence appears on the left of the road, rising gradually in height from north to

south, and still crowned by massive remains of the mighty walls that distinguished Tiryns among the other cities mentioned by Homer (*Il*, ii, 559). Despite the comparatively unassuming nature of the site, the walls of Tiryns, even in ruin, present a deeply impressive spectacle. They are composed of gigantic boulders, roughly hewn, and from 6 to 10 feet long by 3 in width, and rose originally to a height of nearly 70 feet above the level of the hill, or more than 100 feet above that of the surrounding plain. No wonder that Pausanias declared that a pair of mules could not move even the smallest of these huge stones, and that Mycenæ and Tiryns were as astonishing as the Pyramids.

If Mycenæ became the wealthier and more powerful, Tiryns is undoubtedly the older of the two cities. As at Mycenæ, the site had already been long inhabited. Though no traces of gold or silver have been found, excavation has revealed the existence of a far older and more primitive settlement below the remains of the palace. Figurines have been unearthed, crudely made of terra-cotta, stone hammers, knives and arrow-heads of obsidian; the last showing that these early inhabitants were in communication, directly or indirectly, with the island of Melos, from ancient times the centre of the obsidian industry. One pictures the frenzy of excitement and alarm when the long, high-beaked ships of the Minoans came sailing out of the south, and the fight that ensued when the dark-haired, sinewy invaders sprang ashore and charged shouting up the beach.

The destruction of Tiryns, as of Mycenæ, has been so complete that it is difficult to imagine its original appearance three and a half millennia ago. In harmony with the configuration of the hill, the fortress rose in three successive

stages, beginning with the outer ward on the north, which was employed perhaps chiefly as an enclosure for horses and other domestic animals. Highest of all, naturally, was the palace itself, with its courts and colonnades, its men's apartments elaborately divided from those of the women, its carved dadoes of alabaster richly inlaid with *kyanos*, or blue glass paste, its gaily-coloured columns, its walls covered with paintings of hunting scenes and fair ladies. Not the least interesting apartment is the bathroom, the floor of which is a single gigantic block of limestone, 13 feet long and more than 10 feet across. A fragment of a terra-cotta bathtub has been found, and this must have stood in the polished centre of the great block, which slopes gently towards the sides, where it has been carefully hollowed out to a depth of about 5 inches to avoid injury by water to the walls. The runaway for the water is still to be seen in one corner, where it is continued beneath the floor by a stone pipe. In the adjoining wall are traces of what were probably the receptacles of jars of oil, used for post-balneal anointings.

Considering the strength of the castle, one is puzzled to imagine how it could have been taken. It would be difficult to scale, and impossible to breach a well-defended wall 70 feet high, which stands on a steep slope, and is never less than 16, and in places as much as 57, feet thick. The garrison could hardly be starved out, for a stairway in excellent preservation descends through a postern to a spring, and in the thickness of the walls are a series of store-rooms, opening on long galleries, and with windows looking out over the plain below. These curious galleries, which are found in no other ancient fortress in Greece, were used for many years by the local peasants to fold their sheep, with the result that the stones have acquired a marble-like

polish and smoothness from the perpetual rubbing of the animals against them.

To take the place by a sudden rush must have been equally out of the question. To reach the main entrance one had to ascend a broad ramp, where it was impossible to protect oneself with one's shield against the rain of missiles from the great wall above. The entrance itself, it is true, had no gate—perhaps it was closed in war-time by a sort of *chevaux-de-frise*: but even supposing the enemy got inside, they would have been decimated by a point-blank fire, not only from the towers on each side, but also from an inner wall immediately in front. If, having somehow escaped so far, they pushed on—assailed in front, rear and flank simultaneously—down the converging passage to the left, it was only to find their progress blocked by the great inner gate, which resembled the Lion Gate of Mycenæ. We can still see the massive stone jambs—one wholly intact—more than 4 feet thick and nearly 11 feet high, and the arrangements for barring the ponderous wooden doors. Even when these were forced, two other gateways awaited the intruders, each consisting of a central portal with flanking colonnades on each side, an arrangement which, deriving in its turn from the palace of Knossos, is clearly a direct ancestor of the Propylæa at Athens, and indeed, in Frazer's words, "of all Greek ornamental gateways and portals."

Concerning the Tiryns of Hellenic times, Theophrastos has preserved a delightful story. Never, he says, was so light-hearted a people: they laughed and idled from morning to night. Becoming ashamed of their levity, they consulted the Delphic oracle, and were informed that they would be granted a more serious character if they sacrificed a bull to Poseidon without laughing once throughout the

ceremony. Accordingly they assembled for the sacrifice, but they had hardly begun when a remark by a small boy provoked a general explosion of mirth. Realizing that reform was hopeless, they resigned themselves to the will of the gods, and thenceforward laughed and idled as merrily as before.

Nowadays the gulf of Argos is usually named from the port of Nauplia, a mile or so south of Tiryns. It is a cleanly and rather charming little town, and an excellent centre from which to visit the principal places of interest in the Argolid. A curiosity of Nauplia is the famous spring of Kanathros, by bathing in which—so Argive legend declared—Hera renewed her virginity from year to year. There is no record of the water exercising its miraculous power upon mere mortals, and unhappily experiment is now hardly possible, since the spring, about a mile and a half from the town, is enclosed to-day within the garden of the little nunnery of Hagia Moné, whose inmates obviously can—or at any rate should—have no use for it. Heaven, says a Spanish proverb sorrowfully, always bestows almonds on those who have no teeth.

High above the streets and quays of the town two old castles frown down from opposing masses of rock, one of which is still called Palamidí. It has thus from time immemorial preserved its ancient dedication to the legendary hero Palamedes, claimed as the inventor of masts, light-houses and the alphabet. From one's bedroom balcony, looking down on the worn stone quay, where coastal craft with rakish lateen sails lie moored side by side, one commands, especially towards sunset, a panorama of exceptional beauty. Across the dark blue bay, where yet a third castle, built on a tiny rocky islet, rises abruptly from the water's edge, the light of the declining sun lies like a bar of rippled

gold. Beyond the bay the citadel of Argos lifts, darkly purple, against a violet background of great mountains: the crouching bulk of Tiryns peers like some furtive monster between the distant cypresses whose lifted spears line the shore: and further to the north a barren spur of mountain barely conceals the haunted battlements whence the phantom of Klytemnestra stares with fierce eyes across the Argive plain.

From Nauplia an easy run by car brings one to the Hieron of Epidauros, the most famous sanctuary of Asklepios in all Greece, or indeed in the whole Hellenic world. Just as pilgrims and sufferers flock nowadays to Lourdes in the hope of relief, so in ancient times they flocked in thousands to the sanctuary of the god of healing at Epidauros. We can still visit the remains of the long colonnades, to the north-west of the temple ruins, where the patients slept, sometimes for many nights in succession, till the god, appearing to them in a dream, should make them whole, or at least prescribe the requisite treatment. Vast numbers of testimonials from grateful patients were set up or suspended in the sanctuary, and many of them are still to be seen in the local museum. There was, in point of fact, every inducement to recover. Not only was there a large hospital connected with the sanctuary, but the priests could draw upon a long and extensive experience in treating all manner of ailments, and in later times had invariably received a thorough medical training. Moreover, the healthy nature of the site, the agreeable surroundings, the exercises which patients were encouraged to perform in the gymnasium, the distractions of music and drama provided in the theatre, all these, even apart from the profound faith of the sufferers, must have operated powerfully in soothing the mind, and thereby assisting the *vis medicatrix naturæ* to repair the

injuries to the physical frame. The Hieron, in short, presented a fairly close parallel to such present-day health-resorts as Baden or Aix.

Some of the earliest recorded cures, it must be admitted, are a trifle difficult to swallow. One reads, for example, of a case of retarded delivery lasting for *five years*, at the end of which a visit to the Hieron resulted in this phenomenally egg-bound female's giving birth to a sturdy boy, who at once washed himself and walked about with his mother! Such fantasies are offset by the obviously genuine *ex-votos* of later times, such e.g. as that of M. Julius Apelles, who was cured of indigestion by diet and exercise. Needless to say, patients who had obtained relief were expected to show their gratitude to the god in tangible form, and an admirable story shows that the usually good-natured deity could retaliate effectively on the mean and dishonest.

Pandaros, whose features were afflicted with unsightly blotches, dreamed that the god tied a bandage over the marks, bidding him to remove it in the morning and dedicate it. He did so, and found to his joy that the ugly marks had all been transferred to the bandage. On arriving home, he entrusted a sum of money for a thankoffering to a certain Echedoros, who, being similarly afflicted, was likewise about to make the pilgrimage. Echedoros, however, simply put the money in his own pocket, and brazenly denied having ever received it even when the god appeared to him in a dream and questioned him on the subject. At the same time, he promised to make an offering of his own in return for the divine aid. The god thereupon took down the bandage dedicated by Pandaros, tied it over the blemishes of Echedoros, and instructed him, on awakening, to remove it, wash his face, and then look at his reflection in the water. The rascal obeyed the god's instructions,



and found to his horror that his features were now doubly disfigured, having received the blotches of Pandaros in addition to his own.

It is a good tale to recall as we actually stand beside the ancient well of healing which still exists at the south-east corner of the long dormitory. The fact that this colonnade was open to the fresh air must have been of immeasurable advantage in many ailments, when one considers how small and stuffy Greek sleeping quarters usually were, and indeed, at least among the poorer classes, still are. The sacred serpents also played a great part in the cures: so much so, in fact, that one of them was actually sent to Rome when a sanctuary of Asklepios was established on the island in the Tiber. Dogs, too, were sacred to the god: and we read of one patient whose eyes were licked by them to cure his ophthalmia, and of another who was cured of a tumour on the neck in the same manner. A modern invalid, faced with the prospect of being licked in his sleep by snakes or dogs, might conceivably regard the treatment as almost worse than the disease.

On the occasion of my visit to the Hieron, I found the ruins of the temple in undisturbed possession of a number of poultry, recalling the delightful story of the pious cock, who, finding an amputated leg miraculously restored after a night in the sanctuary—the scene is laid, I think, elsewhere than at Epidauros—forthwith appeared before the god's altar to express his gratitude by crowings and flap-pings of wings. The destruction of the temple and the other buildings of the sanctuary has been sadly complete, but there are still interesting remains, both on the spot and in the museum, of a mysterious circular building, or Tholos, westward of the temple. Designed, apparently, by the younger Polykleitos in the fourth century B.C., it must

have been of considerable beauty. Pausanias describes some of the celebrated paintings by Pausias which it contained—notably one of Love discarding his bow for the lyre, and another of Drunkenness drinking from a crystal goblet through which her face could be seen.

Though the Tholos seems to have been used for sacrifices, of their nature and dedication nothing is known. The plan of the building was curious. Twenty-six Doric columns of stone composed the outer peristyle, within which was an inner colonnade of fourteen Ionic columns of marble with Corinthian capitals—one of the earliest-known examples of the use of the Corinthian order in Greek architecture. Beautiful lion's-head spouts adorned the rim of the domed roof, which was surmounted by a floral acroterion. The central portion of the ceiling was of wood, while the remainder was of white marble, elaborately carved and painted. A black-and-white pavement of lozenge-shaped marble slabs enclosed a round central opening which afforded access to the vault beneath. This vault, the most mysterious part of the whole edifice, is carefully designed in the form of a labyrinth—a fact which is obviously in significant relation to the circular form of the building as a whole, and can hardly fail to be connected with some form of ancient solar ritual.

Of the various structures at Epidauros the theatre alone is preserved almost intact. The circular orchestra is indeed the only one of any Greek theatre which is still entire, preserving thus the original form of all Greek orchestras—that of the threshing floor. The floor was of pounded earth, and in the centre there still stands the cylindrical altar of Dionysos, or *thymele*. The acoustics are remarkably perfect. Like the Tholos, the theatre was designed by Polykleitos the younger. To Pausanias, nearly five

centuries after its construction, it appeared more worth seeing than anything else at the Hieron.

It is true (he wrote) that in size the theatre at Megalopolis in Arcadia surpasses it, and that in splendour the Roman theatres far transcend all the theatres in the world; but for symmetry and beauty, what architect could vie with Polykleitos?

## CHAPTER IX

### DELPHI

LEAVING Athens by an early train, one reaches, shortly after midday, the little station which, formerly called Bralo, is now rather absurdly entitled Delphi, despite the fact that Delphi is actually several hours distant on the opposite side of Mount Parnassos. A service of cars runs regularly between the station and Delphi, and as the road is remarkably good, nothing hinders one from enjoying the magnificence of the scenery on the way.

Leaving the plain rapidly behind us, we passed first through the outskirts of the village of Gravia—the scene of an heroic defence against the Turks in 1821—where a score or more of young lambs welcomed us with gambols of the wildest excitement. The road now plunged into the heart of the mountains, winding steeply upwards by a series of hairpin curves to emerge upon the brink of a deep gorge: a small stream foaming among the rocks far below, overhung in places by plane-trees of great size. In about an hour we entered the pass of Amblema—a vast amphitheatre of cliffs, above which the snowy mass of Mount Kiona, 8,240 feet in height, towered against the cloudless sky, with the village of Sigditzá hanging like a swallow's nest half-way up the lower slopes on the far side of the immense valley.

Rounding an outlying flank of Parnassos, we encountered a company of peasants, both men and women, accompanied by a long string of donkeys whose saddle-cloths were brilliant

with colour. We had now passed the highest point of the road: before and below us extended the lovely valley in which is situated Amphissa—a green bower of olives, beyond which glittered the steely-blue expanse of the Corinthian Gulf, backed by the snow-capped summits of the northern Peloponnese. Winding swiftly downwards, we suddenly caught sight of the pretty village of Topolia almost directly below us: the white-walled, flat-roofed houses, half-hidden among the trees, clustering about a little spur, while above it a cascade burst from the steep hill-side, and plunged foaming into the valley. From Topolia it was not long before we halted in the main street of Amphissa, a pleasant if unexciting little town. Though it never played any great part in Greek history, it was a member of the Amphiktyonic League formed by the “dwellers around” the sacred city of Delphi, and was once the principal city of all Lokris. The tawny-red ruins of the old citadel on the Acropolis, still in part dating from classical times, are decidedly picturesque, while the costumes of the country-folk, and the curious trappings and saddles of their animals, impart colour and interest to the streets.

Beyond Amphissa the road runs through a long valley, shut in on the south-west by an almost perpendicular cliff. The entire valley is nothing but an immense olive-grove, watered by innumerable little streams, on whose banks, though January was but half over, the wild anemones were already plentiful—rose-pink, and purple, and brilliant red. Gradually, in great loops, we began to climb once more, obtaining ever lovelier and wider views of the land-locked bay of Itea<sup>1</sup> and the gulf and distant mountains beyond.

<sup>1</sup> The “harbour” (*limen*) of the Delphic pilgrims in the seventh-century Hymn to Pythian Apollo. A steamer from Athens to Itea provides an alternative means of visiting Delphi.

Far above us appeared the village of Delphi, a whitish smudge against the grey-green mountain-side. About half-way up the village of Chryso gazes down, past green fields, towards the valley of Amphissa. Here or hereabouts once stood the powerful city of Krisa, which provoked the wrath of gods and men alike by attempting to claim lordship over Delphi and its oracle, and levying dues on pilgrims. In the holy war that ensued the impious Krisa was levelled with the ground, its inhabitants put to the sword, and a curse pronounced on whosoever should henceforth presume to cultivate its territory. All this took place about 590 B.C.

The sanctuary of Delphi, "the hollow place," completely brought to light since 1892 by the excavations of the French School, stands on a steep slope, falling away precipitously below the modern road into a tremendous gorge, through which the River Pleistos, frequently swollen by the winter rains to a furious torrent, threads its way to the sea. The opposite side of the ravine is formed by the rocky mass of Mount Kirphis, climbing to an altitude of over 4,000 feet, while above and beyond the sanctuary, to north and east, tower like a mighty wall the cliffs known in ancient times as the Phaidriadai, or Shining Cliffs—"the bird-belovèd haunt of deity."<sup>1</sup> Converging at an angle, they are separated only by a narrow cleft, gloomy and tortuous, at whose entrance the Castalian spring still wells from the base of the rock. The wild grandeur, and, still more, the curiously uncanny quality, of the scenery is perhaps best conveyed by the famous lines from Kubla Khan—

A savage place, as holy and enchanted  
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted  
By woman wailing for her demon lover.

<sup>1</sup> Æsch., *Eum.*, 23.

It was, one realizes at once, inevitable that such a place should awaken the profoundest awe in the hearts of those who first penetrated its silence and solitude, and impress them with the belief that the gods themselves had chosen it for their dwelling-place.

In course of time, naturally, the inhospitable aspect of the valley grew less pronounced. The continuous stream of pilgrims attracted to the Oracle gave rise to a flourishing town, whose population in the time of Pausanias amounted to about 10,000. Numerous remains of houses may yet be observed south of the precinct wall, called by the local inhabitants the *Hellanikó*, or "Giants' Wall": for in the vocabulary of the peasants the name "*Hellenes*" has come to signify not Greeks but giants. Most of these dwellings are simple affairs enough, a mere "*but and ben*": they are built of undressed stones with an earth filling, and stood one above another on terraces cut in the rock. Some of the walls yet show traces of the stucco with which they were covered internally.

The principal approach to Delphi seems to have been on the east, by an older equivalent of the road which now connects Delphi with its nearest neighbour, *Aráchova*. At the entrance to the town stood the group of temples whose ruins are now ominously known as the *Marmoria* (i.e. quarry). Before reaching these the traveller passed through a long series of tombs, of the most diverse description, from niches or chambers hewn out of the living rock to elaborately sculptured sarcophagi like that which now stands before the local museum. Just beyond the *Marmoriá*, marking the entrance to this necropolis, a large rock, fallen from the cliffs above, has been chiselled to represent the door of the Lower World—*atri ianua Ditis*. Frost or earthquake, unfortunately, have split the rock in twain. Not improb-



*Photo by Author*





ably colour was originally employed to enhance the effect of the massive double portals, studded with nails and heavily barred, which now suggest nothing so much as the entrance to Ali Baba's cave, requiring only an "Open Sesame!" to roll back and disclose the treasures within.

The Marmoriá temples were mostly deserted even in the second century A.D., but the marble ruins, gleaming whitely through the misty green of the olives, are very beautiful. Enormous boulders from the cliffs towering overhead tell plainly how the destruction was effected. Little remains of the old temple of Athena, a Doric structure of the sixth century, which, having been twice destroyed by falling rocks, was eventually replaced by another temple, built in a less exposed position. Beyond it are two small temples or treasuries, one in Doric, the other in Ionic style, and next to these the remains of a very beautiful circular building (*tholos*), in which it has been proposed to recognize a prytaneion modelled on that of Athens. The outer colonnade was Doric, the inner Corinthian. Lastly we come to the new temple of Athena, erected in the second half of the fourth century B.C., and, like its predecessor, in Doric style. Since it was the last temple which a traveller passed before reaching the sanctuary of Apollo, it was dedicated to Athena Who Dwells Before the Temple (*Athena Pronaia*), a title which, by an obvious play upon words, was later transformed into that of Athena Forethought (*Pronoia*), appropriate to the goddess who represented the wisdom of Zeus, her sire.

This sanctuary of the Marmoriá would seem to have been of no less antiquity than that of Apollo, though it never attained to the same celebrity. But the mysterious associations of both are long antecedent to either Apollo or Athena. In both the most ancient objects discovered take

us back to the Creto-Mycenean period, though the first great epoch of the two sanctuaries, corresponding to the period of Mycenæ's supremacy in the Ægean, appears to have lain between 1400 and 1200 B.C. The installation of Apollo at Delphi was undoubtedly complete before the Homeric age. Priesthood and ritual alike seem to have been introduced from Knossos, where Apollo appears to have been identified with a local dolphin-god. Below the holy of holies in the Delphic temple the excavators came upon a fragment of a lion-headed rhyton closely resembling a rhyton found in the palace of Minos at Knossos, and regarded as belonging to the Golden Age of Crete (L.M. II), between 1500 and 1450 B.C. It stirs the imagination to reflect that, as Professor Poulsen suggests, we may quite possibly have here one of the sacred vessels "with which one of the first priests in the second millennium purified the ground, and dedicated it to the new lord of the oracle."

That the Minoan mother-goddess was once adored at Delphi is hardly to be doubted. The Greeks appear to have identified her here with their own Earth-goddess, Ge or Gaia, the Mother and grave of all living things, of whom numerous rude clay images have been found in the vicinity both of Apollo's temple and of the shrine of the Pronaia. Among these images two are especially interesting, as showing the goddess, divinely nude, and seated on a sort of three-legged throne. In the oldest Delphic legends it is Ge to whom belong the oracle, the sacred spring, the sacrificial grove filled with votive tripods. But in the religion of the Greeks Zeus, the great lord of heaven, was supreme among the gods, and hence the ancient Mistress of the land, even though she had herself become a naturalized Hellene, was not suffered to enjoy undivided dominion. Even in historic times Zeus and Ge together were still generally acknow-

ledged as the ultimate source of all the oracles delivered at Delphi.

In 482 B.C., during the Persian invasion of Greece, a detachment of the invaders marched against Delphi, greedy for the temple treasures. Priests and people fled in panic: only the prophet of Apollo and a little body of sixty men remained in the town, encouraged by an oracular announcement that the god would protect his own. Despite their faith, they may well have felt anxious as they watched the Persian soldiery swing into view round the angle of the cliff near the Marmoriá, and heard their fierce war-cry of triumph as they sighted their intended prey.

And then—the miracle! For some time the sky had been growing darker and more sombrely leaden, while great clouds, inky-blue, gathered ominously on the mountain-tops. Hardly had the cheer left the Persians' lips, when a flash of blinding light seemed to rip the sky across from end to end, while a deafening crash of thunder rolled reverberatingly among the hollows of the ravine. Struck with sudden fear, the invaders, who had just reached the shrine of the Pronaia, came irresolutely to a halt: and at the same instant two huge rocks detached themselves from the cliffs of Parnassos, and fell with devastating effect upon the barbarians below. With one accord the terrified survivors turned and fled for their lives, many of them being cut down in flight by the pursuing Delphians.

Apollo had defended himself in a manner that must unquestionably have done much to raise the prestige of his oracle. Nor indeed, "though now his altars are no more divine," has he by any means lost his ancient power. In 1840, by a singular coincidence, the famous German scholar, K. O. Müller, who had formulated the theory that Apollo was not a solar deity, actually sustained a fatal sunstroke

in the very temple of the insulted god. The opportunity thus afforded to the superstitious was naturally far from being neglected.

Between the temple of Athena and the sanctuary lies the ancient gymnasium, with its colonnade and bathing-pool. A little beyond, the plane-trees that overshadow the road warn the visitor of the proximity of the Castalian spring, though the plane averred by legend to have been planted by the hands of Agamemnon has long survived only in memory. Nothing could be more Dantesquely impressive than the situation of the spring at the mouth of the shadowy ravine, shut in by immense cliffs that almost hide the sky. In the fourth century, when the Phokians had usurped the control of Delphi, a fierce battle against the forces of Lokris took place on the summit of the Phaidriadai. It requires little imagination to picture the struggle on those dizzy heights, or the ghastly fate of the defeated Lokrians, many of whom leaped to death from the summit of the precipice.

Flowing sluggishly from a rocky channel into a wide artificial basin, the water is less deep nowadays than when, descending the still existing steps, the pilgrims washed away all physical and—at least in intention—all spiritual impurities before entering the Apolline sanctuary. The priestess of the oracle possibly washed herself in the pure water of Castaly as a preliminary to acting as the mouth-piece of the deity, but the belief that the spring itself inspired prophecy is found only in comparatively late times. Various niches, probably for the deposit of votive offerings to the nymph of the spring, are hollowed out of the face of the rock, which has been artificially smoothed, on the farther side of the pool. In one of these niches is the drum of an antique column, which was used as an altar when the niche was converted into a chapel of the Baptist.

Their ablutions completed, the pilgrims made their way to the main entrance of the sanctuary, at the south-east angle of the enclosing wall. In front of the gate is a wide court, whose pavement, like the colonnade on the north, and the rooms behind it, date from the Roman period. On either side of the entrance were two basins for lustral water, with which the devout sprinkled their breasts and foreheads before crossing the threshold. The paved street which leads from the gateway to the temple is usually known as the Sacred Way, though in point of fact no such name is found in any ancient author. The actual pavement dates only from the time of the Empire, and is in fact constructed of materials taken from older buildings that had been pulled down. On either side, statues, treasuries, offerings and memorials of all kinds were crowded indiscriminately together, and turned the winding avenue to the temple into a marvellous museum of ancient art.

At Delphi, as at other sanctuaries, the treasuries erected by the various Greek states resembled small temples. They served both to house the valuable plate and other articles employed on the occasion of an embassy, and also as a convenient stand from which the state's representatives could watch the elaborate processions that took place from time to time. Finest of all at Delphi was the treasury of the Knidians, a reconstruction of which, as well as the actual sculptures discovered, is in the local museum. The only treasury actually standing on its original site, however, is that of the Athenians, which has been patched together—on the whole, very successfully—from the fragments found on the spot. According to Pausanias, whom there seems no reason to doubt, it was erected in memory of Marathon. Here it was that Xenophon, as he tells us in the *Anabasis*, set up a statue of Apollo after his safe return with the

Ten Thousand from their wonderful march through Asia Minor. An unusually interesting discovery was that of two hymns dating from the early second century B.C., inscribed with their musical notation on the inside of the south wall.

The little treasury was not the only memorial of the Athenians at Delphi, for only a few yards away one still sees the remaining columns, and the stylobate with its archaic inscription, of an Ionic portico which was probably built in the sixth century B.C. Another Marathon trophy was set up near the principal entrance, consisting of a number of statues representing Athena and Apollo attended by Miltiades, Theseus and a gallant company of Attic heroes. The work is said to have been executed by Pheidias, which would mean that it was not begun till more than thirty years after the battle itself. On the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War, the triumphant Spartans seized the opportunity to put up, directly facing this monument, an elaborate votive memorial of the battle of Aigospotamoi, which, by the annihilation of the Athenian fleet, had compelled Athens to an ignominious peace. Statues of the Spartan captains and admirals rubbed elbows with half the Hellenic pantheon, but with the gradual decay of Sparta's wealth and power the monument fell into neglect, until, by the time Plutarch visited Delphi, the bronze statues had grown so rusty that the naval heroes all looked to him as though they had just been fished up out of the sea.

Close to the Treasury of the Athenians another interesting discovery was made—that of two statues of youths, remarkably alike, and executed with an archaism that cannot be later than the end of the seventh century. The fragmentary inscriptions on the bases prove that the sculptor was an Argive, and further that they were the very statues of Kleobis and

Biton seen and described by Herodotos in the fifth century. Kleobis and Biton, he tells us, were the twin sons of the priestess of Hera at Argos. One day, for some reason, the horses for her carriage were not available just when they were needed to convey her to the Heraion. Seeing their mother's distress, her sons themselves seized the shafts, and dragged her safely to the shrine—an act of piety for which the statues of the two youths were set up at Delphi by the Argives. So far the story is probably true, but by the time of Herodotos the mythopœic genius of the Greek imagination had added the famous legend that their mother implored Hera to grant them in reward her best of all gifts, and that the goddess did so by laying upon them in her own temple a deep sleep from which they passed without awaking into the dreamless sleep of death.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be hoped that the reader is not in too great haste to reach the temple, for the vicinity of the Athenian Treasury is one of the most interesting parts of the whole sanctuary. Immediately beyond the adjoining foundations of what was

<sup>1</sup> The story is linked, in the entrancing narrative of Herodotos, with the legendary interview between the sage, Solon, and Crœsus, king of Lydia, famed for his vast wealth. Asked to name the happiest of mortals, Solon—to the king's surprise and chagrin—selects Tellus, an obscure Athenian, and the brothers Kleobis and Biton, adding that no man should be considered happy till the manner of his death was known. Eventually Crœsus is captured by Cyrus: about to be burned alive, he recalls the words of the sage, and exclaims in anguish, "O Solon, Solon, Solon!" Hearing these strange words, Cyrus demands their meaning, and is moved by the story to reflect that he too is but mortal. He commands that the fire be quenched, but the flames are already leaping fiercely about the captive king. Then Crœsus calls on Delphic Apollo, to whom he has given greater gifts than all other men, and the god, hearing his cry, sends clouds into the clear sky, and extinguishes the fire with a sudden storm of rain. The Delphic origin of the story is apparent.



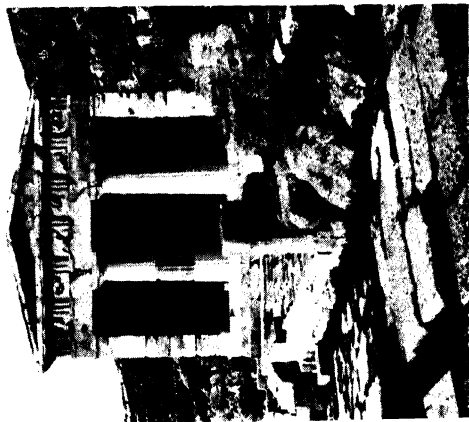
probably the Bouleuterion is a mass of virgin rock, which must obviously have been left undisturbed for some special reason, considering that every inch of ground surrounding it is or was occupied by monuments of various kinds. It is divided by a fissure, now choked to some extent with earth and grasses, but once considerably deeper. This is the rock from whose summit, so Plutarch tells us, the Delphic Sibyl, Herophile, oldest of all her mystic sisterhood, was wont to chant her prophecies. Probably for this reason, the Naxians set up behind it a tall Ionic column, with Doric flutes, surmounted by a large Sphinx, a creature closely associated with prophecy. It was brilliantly painted. "When it was seen against the sun's rays," says Plutarch, "its back was of a golden hue; but when standing against the clouds, it threw back a dark blue reflection, just like the rainbow." Both the Sphinx itself and part of the column, found by the French excavators, are to be seen in the local museum, together with a reconstruction of the entire monument.

Within the cleft of the Sibyl's Rock dwelt the grim dragon, Python, guarding the sacred spring of the Earth-goddess, Ge, which even in prehistoric times had made Delphi famous by its mysterious sanctity. The monster was overcome and slain by the dread shafts of Apollo: and so terrible was the stench of its putrefying corpse that the entire district lying below Parnassos was henceforth known as Pytho. Such, in fact, was the only name by which the district was known to Hesiod and the authors of the Homeric poems: and such is the explanation accepted in the *Hymn to Apollo*, where the name is derived from a Greek word meaning "to rot away."

Beyond the Rock of the Sibyl, and facing the Stoa of the Athenians, extends an open space—once, doubtless, more level than now—which was known as the Halōs, or threshing



DELPHI : THE ORIGINAL OMPILLOS  
(ABOVE) AND THAT SEEN BY PAUSANIAS  
(BELOW).



*Photos. by Author.*

DELPHI : TREASURY OF THE ATHENIANS.



floor. Here, every seven years, or—more accurately—in every eighth year, a kind of miracle play was enacted in memory of Apollo's conquest of Delphi. At the same festival was performed a remarkable piece of programme music called the Pythian Air. Composed chiefly for the flute, with special passages for fifes and trumpets, it was intended to represent vividly the fight between Apollo and the Dragon. Seated on stone benches and other points of vantage round the Halōs, the spectators quivered with emotion as the flute mimicked the twang of Apollo's silver bow, and the fierce hum as the arrow sped unerringly to its mark. A discordant braying of trumpets represented the grinding and gnashing of the stricken monster's terrible fangs: his dying howls were rendered with fearsome verisimilitude by the fifes: and finally a gay lilting tune on the flute suggested the triumph of the god above the body of his vanquished foe. As the last notes died away, exulting shouts burst from the assembled worshippers, who then with hymns and dances expressed their joy and relief at the result of the combat.

As one rounds the precinct wall of the temple, constructed in the finest polygonal masonry, one notices on the right of the Sacred Way a large square pedestal surmounted by a round base with two steps. Here, in 479 B.C., the Platæans erected a great golden tripod, with a central column formed of three intertwining serpents, on whose coils were engraved the names of all the Greek states which had shared in the crowning victory over the Persians at Plataea. How much of this famous monument was actually of gold, and how much of gilded bronze, is now impossible to decide. During the ten-years' war which followed the Phokian seizure of Delphi in 356 B.C., the treasures of the sanctuary, including the golden portions of the Platæan

offering, were melted down to pay the Phokian mercenaries. The gilt-bronze remainder, which perhaps consisted of the Serpent Column only, continued to adorn the Sacred Way for nearly 800 years more, till it was carried off by Constantine, and set up in the great Hippodrome of his new capital beside the Bosphorus. Yet another thousand years passed, and Constantinople was stormed by the Turks under Mohammed II, who is said to have struck off the head of one of the serpents with his scimitar as he rode in triumph through the fallen city. Headless, its historic inscription now almost effaced, it still stands in the midst of the At-Meidan of the former Turkish capital, the hostage of that very Orient whose repulse it was designed to commemorate twenty-four centuries ago.

The memorial of Plataea, appropriately enough, is in close proximity to that of another triumph of West over East achieved at the other end of the Mediterranean. A few yards further on, at the upper extremity of the Sacred Way, are the bases of the golden tripods dedicated by Gelon, tyrant of Syracuse, and his brothers, Hieron and Polyzalos, in gratitude for the destruction of a vast host of Carthaginians in 480 B.C. at Himera, on the north coast of Sicily. All through the heat of the long summer day, while the battle swayed to and fro, the Punic general, Hamilcar, stood beside the altar, sacrificing victim after victim in the vain hope that Baal would fight for his worshippers: and when at last the Carthaginian host broke in utter rout, he flung himself into the flames, the last and noblest offering of all. Italian archæologists have recently discovered the ruins of the temple which the Greeks raised on the battlefield in commemoration of their great victory. Like Salamis in the same year, Himera was decisive for the destiny of Europe: and the subsequent tradition that the two battles took place

on the same day shows that the fact had not failed to impress itself on the imagination of their contemporaries.

An entire volume, however, would be required, were one to attempt to describe categorically each of the innumerable monuments which once met the eye of the pilgrim as he climbed the winding way to Apollo's shrine.

Merely the swarms of statues before the eastern side of the temple would give us enough to do, declares Professor Poulsen, for here, mixed up with one another, stood statues of Apollo, equestrian statues, bulls, asses, goats, and a bronze palm-tree, a gilded statue of Athena, a similarly gilded statue of the *hetaira* Phryne, between bronze figures of King Archidamus of Sparta and King Philip of Macedon. Some—like the bronze statue of Apollo Sitalkas, about 17 metres high . . . could assert themselves by their size alone; while others had to be raised on columns or pillars to be seen.

A good example of the last is the tall rectangular pedestal of a monument to Prusias II, king of Bithynia, erected about 180 B.C., which still stands immediately before the entrance to the temple.

The excavation of the temple, of which high expectations had been entertained, proved sorely disappointing. Practically nothing but the foundations remained, and indeed the destruction had been so complete that the excavators could not help asking themselves if it had not been due less to earthquake or even to ignorant spoliation than to a deliberate and carefully executed intention, whether on the part of Christian fanatics or of the last priestly guardians of the shrine. It was the last of a series of successive temples erected on the site, the earliest of which appears to have been burnt to the ground about 548 B.C. This first temple seems to have been provided with "lightning-conductors" of a highly remarkable nature. The French archæologist, Salomon Reinach, has adduced evidence to show that

the early Greeks, conforming to a custom widespread throughout Western Europe, sought to protect their temples against lightning by means of the eagle, as the lightning-bird *par excellence*, bound and fastened to a post in either pediment: the pediment, in fact, thence derived its name *aetós* (eagle), *aetoma*.

At Delphi, however, the eagles were apparently substituted by iynx-birds, or wrynecks, as being sacred to Apollo, which were bound, not to posts, but to wheels—the emblems of the sun—thus securing the sun’s protection for the Sun-God’s temple. The celebrated thaumaturge, Apollonios of Tyana, declared that in the temple of Apollo at Delphi were suspended golden iynx-birds which “echoed the persuasive notes of Siren voices”: and Pausanias, though he rejects the story, quotes a passage from Pindar which says that “from above the gable Sang charmers all of gold.”<sup>1</sup>

The restoration of the old temple after the conflagration of 548 was carried out, largely at their own cost, and in a more splendid style than before, by the banished Athenian family of the Alkmæonids, who were desirous of enlisting the powerful support of the Delphic oracle in their efforts to obtain repatriation. Instead of the stone façade specified in the contract they presented the new building with a façade of Parian marble. Some scanty fragments of sculpture in the museum may have formed part of a group of Herakles wrestling with Apollo for possession of the sacred Tripod, a subject represented later in the pediment of the Knidian treasury: while a group in tufa of Athena slaying the giant Enkelados shows that the west pediment was adorned with a Gigantomachia.

Among the many votive offerings which surrounded the temple of the Alkmæonids, two—now in the museum—still attract our admiration. The first of these is the famous

<sup>1</sup> A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, I, 259.

bronze charioteer of Polyzalos, part of a group originally dedicated by some ruler of Gela in Sicily. This is proved by remains of an earlier inscription below that of Polyzalos, who, as already mentioned, was the brother of Gelon of Syracuse. The magnificent figure, executed with such delicacy and sincerity, must have been some noble of the Sicilian court. The pose, so quietly upright, with the reins held firmly but without effort, shows that the chariot was represented, either as at a standstill, or as proceeding round the stadion after winning the race.

The second monument is the curious column decorated with acanthus and other leaves, and surmounted by a pillar enclosed by three dancing maidens. The whole probably formed the support of a tripod. Professor Poulsen points out that the column itself is closely paralleled by the columns in the choir of S. Prassede at Rome, whose original date and provenance, however, are equally unknown. The maidens themselves, from their dress and their tall crowns of rushes, are evidently copied from those of Karyai or Caryæ in Laconia, celebrated for its temple of Artemis, in whose honour maidens annually performed a peculiar dance of immemorial antiquity. The representation of these virgin dancers of Caryæ in some similar monument was doubtless the origin of the term "Caryatid" applied to columns in the shape of female figures—a term in use apparently as early as the fourth century B.C. The present work has been shown<sup>1</sup> to be that of some Attic artist of the Praxitelean school, probably influenced by a famous group of Caryatid dancers from the chisel of Praxiteles himself.

"What the Delphians call the Navel (*omphalos*)," says Pausanias in his description of Delphi, "is made of white

<sup>1</sup> Th. Homolle, *Revue archeol.*, 1917, v, 39 f.



marble, and is said by them to be at the centre of the whole earth." Not far from the tripod-bases of the Syracusan princes, the French excavators found the large cone-shaped block of white marble, sculptured with an elaborate network or *agrenon*, which is now in the museum, and which is undoubtedly the omphalos seen by Pausanias. The omphalos is frequently represented in antique reliefs, as well as on coins and vases, and is usually flanked by two eagles, looking opposite ways. Modern archæologists are now far better acquainted with the real origin and meaning of this mysterious object than were the Greeks themselves, who had a legend that Zeus had found the exact centre of the world by releasing, from opposite ends of it, two eagles, which had met at Delphi.

The true significance of the omphalos is as curious as it is primitive. Legend told how the infant Zeus, born of his mother Rhea in a cavern of Mount Dikte in Crete, was transported subsequently to Olympos: during the journey his umbilical cord dropped off, and a mound raised above it marked the spot where the sacred relic<sup>1</sup> fell to earth. The story about the eagles was, of course, purely ætiological: they appeared on the omphalos, not only as symbols, but as actual visible forms, of the god himself. Such was the origin of the omphalos, of which, however, that seen by Pausanias, as indeed by most other travellers, was a mere imitation. The true omphalos, conventionalized in the course of centuries into an ovoid block of stone, was far too sacred to be shown to all comers. Covered for additional security with a real *agrenon* of woollen fillets elaborately knotted, it was preserved in the innermost part of the *adyton*, the holy of holies, to which few penetrated save the priests

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the *praeputium Christi*, long treasured as a relic at the Lateran until stolen by the lansknights during the sack of Rome in 1527.

and the priestess, called the Pythia, who, seated upon the mystic tripod, uttered the responses of the oracle.

The adyton formed a small chapel in the south-west of the cella, breaking the inner row of columns on the south side. It consisted of two parts: an upper chamber furnished with a stone bench for the consultants of the oracle, and below it a crypt, connected with the upper room by a stair, whither the Pythia descended to take her seat upon the tripod. The old belief that the tripod was situated above a chasm from which proceeded an intoxicating vapour which inspired the Pythia to prophetic frenzy has finally been disproved: <sup>1</sup> what the vapour really was is clear enough from the account of Plutarch. "The chapel (*oikos*) where the consultants are told to sit and wait," he says (*De defectu oracul.* 50), "is suffused . . . at irregular intervals by a sweet savour: the cavern (*adyton*) emits . . . exhalations like those of the richest and most precious of perfumes."

Here it was that we may picture the Athenian envoys in 480 B.C., as described by Herodotos, seated—"trembling, pale, in ghastly fears"—while they waited to learn the fate of their city, threatened by the Persian hordes. The reply came swiftly, filled with woeful import—"Flee, unhappy men! get ye forth from the sanctuary!" But the envoys, with the stubbornness of despair, refused to obey. "Give us another answer, lord," they besought, "or else we shall abide in Thine house till we die!" This insistence produced at length one of the ambiguous *pronunciamentos* for which the Delphic oracle was proverbial—the famous message that "a wooden wall" would save Athens. It was, of course, vindicated by the triumph of Salamis: but had the Greeks been defeated at sea, the priests would unquestionably have declared that those who had erected a stockade on the

<sup>1</sup> A. P. Oppé, *The Chasm at Delphi*, J.H.S., xxiii, 214.

Acropolis had interpreted the oracle aright, and that had the rest of the Athenians but joined in the defence, instead of taking to their ships, all would have been well.

Such expertness in the art of sitting on a fence was repeatedly displayed by the oracle at Delphi. Everyone will remember how King Crœsus, hoping for victory against Persia, was told that if he went to war he would destroy a mighty kingdom—which turned out eventually, however, to be his own. When the famous Theban leader, Epaminondas, bidden by the oracle to beware of the “pelagos” (i.e. sea), was mortally wounded at Mantinea, in the heart of the Peloponnese, it was found that the oracle had really referred to a certain wood, named Pelagos, near which he breathed his last. Nero was warned that evil threatened him “from the seventy-third year.” When he died comparatively young, it was pointed out that seventy-three was the age of his rival and successor, Galba.

The temple built by the Alkmæonids was totally ruined by an earthquake in 373 B.C., when enormous rocks from the Phaidriadai crashed down upon the sanctuary. Its materials were utilized in the foundations of the present temple, completed about 330, and more than once restored, especially under the Empire. Doric in style, it had a six-columned portico at each end, and fifteen columns on each side: its proportions, 190 feet long by 75 feet wide, seem to have preserved those of the primitive temple destroyed in 548. Statues of Apollo and the Muses, accompanied by Leda, Artemis and Helios, occupied the east pediment: in the western were Dionysos and his wild women, the Thyiadai. A solitary surviving metope still plainly shows the marks left by one of the Gallic shields of bronze suspended on the façade after the repulse of a Gaulish invasion in 279 B.C. Golden shields dedicated by the

Athenians from the spoils of Plataea likewise adorned the architrave.

It was probably on one of the two entrance columns of the pronaos that a number of famous sayings, such as "Know thyself," "Nothing in excess," which were attributed to the Seven Sages, were engraved. Here, in the front of the temple, was the marble omphalos mentioned by Pausanias. Within the temple itself, on the right, stood an altar of Poseidon, and further along the right aisle, facing the entrance to the adyton, was the sacred hearth of Apollo, on which the fire of pinewood was never allowed to go out. Here Neoptolemos, the son of Achilles, was said to have been slain by the priest of Apollo—a legend which probably records a primitive nature-rite of human sacrifice—and hither Orestes had fled for refuge from the avenging Erinyes.

The position of the adyton is marked by a deep cavity in the pavement of the temple. Here, only a few years ago, the actual omphalos, against all hope, was brought to light—a rough limestone block, once coated with stucco. On it are rudely incised the mystic character E—which was frequently represented also in the temple above—and the genitive form ΓΑΣ, "of the Earth," or "of Ge." The top is pierced with a hole, from which projects a knife-shaped blade of iron, once serving to wedge an upright wooden stem which has long since perished. Professor A. B. Cook propounds the fascinating suggestion that the iron blade may be the very knife, preserved as a relic of surpassing holiness, with which the divine navel-string was believed to have been severed. As for the wooden stem, it was, he believes, simply a magical "sky-pillar." The fear lest the sky, which they conceive as an immense roof, should fall upon them, is one shared by many primitive

peoples: and what more natural, therefore, than to prevent such a calamity by setting up a pillar, which, by sympathetic magic, will hold up the sky as an ordinary pillar holds up the roof of a house? The well-known column at Mainz dedicated by Nero is one of the best surviving examples of a practice which, originating in the remotest antiquity, continued to exist even in the most civilized period of the ancient world, and which, it is hinted, may not be unconnected with our own English custom of the May-pole.

Naturally Delphi, as the centre of the earth, was the best possible place for a sky-pillar. And here we come to the solution of the mysterious E. We have been looking at it the wrong way up. Seen thus,  $\Pi$ , its meaning becomes clear: it is simply the sky with its three pillars—one in the middle, and one at each end. In fact, it is a tripod—the tripod which became eventually the symbol of Apollo: and since the god's throne was above the heavens, the Pythia; by seating herself above the tripod, the magic symbol of the heavens, became herself temporarily divine, or at least inspired with the divine afflatus. This at once throws a new light on the little clay figures, seated in three-legged chairs, of which mention was previously made. The chair in question is simply a form of the tripod, representing the triply-supported sky, on which the goddess herself reclines, Swinburnianly noble and nude and antique.

For, of course, the tripod was not originally associated with Apollo, any more than Apollo was the rightful, or at any rate the original, lord of Delphi. He is an Asiatic from Lycia, an alien who has achieved his Delphic supremacy by force of invasion, as we may judge from the story of his encounter with Python, who is merely the Earth-goddess under her chthonic form. This supposition is borne out

by the actual miracle-play, which had nothing in common with the legend as depicted in the Pythian Air, and indeed suggests a much more literal approximation to the historical facts. Though some of the details are obscure, we know that a youth, leading a troop of companions accompanied by a band of holy women, silently entered the Halōs, and, sword in hand, set fire to a wooden hut representing a palace; subsequently going through a ceremony of purification analogous to that performed by Apollo in the Vale of Tempe after his slaying of the Dragon. A memory of the actual capture and destruction of the ancient Creto-Mycenean palace-shrine by the Dorian invaders who, as all the evidence tends to prove, introduced the worship of Apollo to Delphi, seems undoubtedly to be preserved in this singular pantomime.

The old Hellenic cult of Zeus and Ge—identified at Delphi with Themis (?“She Who Puts Forth”)—seems at all events to have offered a stubborn resistance to the usurpation of the foreigner, who in fact to the very end never succeeded completely in dislodging the ancient possessors of the holy place. Zeus and his omphalos continued to dwell in the inmost sanctuary of Apollo’s temple: and if Ge remained without, it was chiefly because she preferred her ancient laurel-grove, the place of sacrifice, filled from time immemorial, as we know from the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*, with sacred tripods offered by the worshippers. For the laurel also, though eventually annexed by Apollo, belonged originally to the Earth-goddess. The nymph Daphnis, who was said—so Pausanias tells us—to have been the first priestess of Ge, is merely *daphne*, the laurel, in human form: the story of her pursuit by Apollo and her transformation into a laurel-tree is nothing but a poetical attempt to explain the laurel’s connection with Apollo. A laurel, or

at any rate an arrangement of laurel-branches, stood beside the mystic tripod in the cavern of the Pythia, who also attained the necessary degree of oracular intoxication by inhaling the smoke of burning laurel-leaves. The laurel at Delphi, declares Professor Poulsen, like the oak at the great sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, is "the primeval sacred symbol, the tree whose boughs were filled with all the mystery of the place."

Traces of the sacred grove were still to be seen as late as the fifth century B.C. on the terrace just south of the temple, where the remains of the temple of Ge are still visible—a small, very ancient building, terminating in an apse, like similar ancient buildings discovered on the Athenian Acropolis. It stood, naturally, close to her immemorial spring, which, after passing through the cave of the Pythia in the great temple above, gushed forth here as of old, and supplied libations for Ge and the Muses, who, from their watery origin, were naturally at home beside it. This is "the sanctuary of Earth and the water," over which Plutarch and his friends gazed, when, as he tells us, they walked round the temple of Apollo, and sat down to rest upon the southern steps of the colonnade.

Zeus and Ge Themis, however, were not the only deities with whom Apollo had to contend. At some time or other immigrants from Thrace had implanted at Delphi the worship of Dionysos—risen from the dead after his barbarous murder at the hands of the Titans. Dionysos was no more willing than the others to surrender his claims. Throughout antiquity his tomb was to be seen in the cave of the Pythia along with the omphalos and a golden statue of Apollo. Perhaps a certain sympathy may have existed between the two Asiatic gods—Apollo the Lycian, Dionysos the Phrygian—as against the Hellenic divinities on whose domain they

were both intruders. At all events they divided the Delphic year between them: during the three winter months Apollo was regarded as absent from Delphi, revisiting his ancient Hyperborean home, and Dionysos reigned in his stead. High above Delphi, on the steep slopes of Parnassos, one may still climb to the stalactitic Korykian Cave, whither the Thyiads—the wild female votaries of the god—were wont to climb with thyrsi and torches in the snowy mid-winter darkness to dance their frantic dances to Dionysos. On one of these *Walpurgisnachten*, the Thyiads were caught by a terrible snowstorm, in which they nearly perished. So intense was the cold that the garments of their rescuers were frozen stiff, and actually snapped into fragments when an attempt was made to stretch them out.

The more normal aspect of the Dionysos-cult is seen in the theatre, which is still, as in the days of Pausanias, “worth seeing.” Except for the stage, it is in fairly good preservation. A climb of about five minutes brings one to the Stadion, where the Pythian Games, founded to commemorate the destruction of Krisa, were held every fourth year. The site has been formed by cutting away the flank of the mountain, the seats on the outer or southern side being supported by a wall of polygonal masonry which is at least as early as the fifth century B.C. Three round-headed arches, of which only the somewhat massive jambs remain, formed the entrance to the course, and at the far end a little spring still wells up noiselessly within a small arched chamber. The great race-course, the long tiers of limestone seats, where silence and desolation have so long replaced the animated scene when the beautiful bright bodies of the athletes flashed by beneath the eyes of an applauding multitude, are as impressive as anything at Delphi. The splendour and the shouting are gone: and as the sun sinks below the western



heights, and the grey shadows steal forth like ghosts upon the stillness, the oldest gods of all resume their reign as it was in the beginning, throned eternally upon the lonely hills and in the infinite depths of the sky.

## CHAPTER X

### OLYMPIA

IN a remote corner of the Peloponnese, between the confluent streams of the Alpheios and its tributary, the Kladeos, lies Olympia, the once glorious sanctuary of Zeus. An atmosphere of tranquil, not to say melancholy, beauty broods over what was once the Altis—now a quiet meadow strewn with masses or fragments of ruined masonry, where wild-flowers nod amid the grasses and in the crevices of the grey earthquake-shattered stones. The word Altis, by which the entire precinct of the sanctuary was known, literally meant a grove: and the memory of the ancient grove of Zeus is perpetuated to-day by the fir-trees that everywhere cast their sombre shadow upon ruins and flowers alike. Above the deserted sanctuary the wooded Hill of Kronos gazes out over the wide valley where Alpheios, that once impetuous wooer of the nymph Arethusa, winds his way to the Ionian Sea, some 12 or 15 miles distant. From the neighbouring hill of Drouva its steel-grey waste is plainly discernible, as well as the large island of Zante—*medio apparet fluctu nemorosa Zacynthus*: while, as one turns one's eyes inland, the snow-clad summit of Mount Pholœ lifts its head above the intervening ranges.

For a thousand years or more the Olympic Games were the supreme expression of Greek national sentiment. Welcome and rejoicing everywhere met the heralds of Elis as

they journeyed from state to state and from city to city to announce the approach of the festival, and from all parts of the land competitors and spectators converged upon Olympia, together with numerous State embassies equipped with the utmost magnificence in honour of the greatest of the gods. No distinction that a Greek could win could surpass that of having achieved the simple wreath of olive which rewarded a victory at the games. Such a victory was regarded as conferring the highest honours on the victor's native city, which accordingly signalized his return with unbounded enthusiasm, frequently backed up by substantial privileges and rewards.

With the gradual extension of Hellenic influence beyond the borders of Hellas, and the corresponding decay of the older Greek states themselves, an inevitable change set in. More and more frequently the olive crown was carried off, not—as of old—by Athenians, Spartans, Thebans, Argives and Corinthians, but by competitors from Macedonia, Thessaly, Egypt and even more distant lands. The renaissance of Hellenism in the second century A.D., when Olympia was never so crowded or so wealthy, coincided likewise with a steady degeneration of the athletic ideal in actual practice. The cancer of professionalism had taken hold, and more than all else brought about the degradation of the sacred festival to which Pindar had once dedicated his noblest flights of song. The last recorded victor was Varazdates, a Persian Arsacid from Armenia, who won the prize for boxing in A.D. 385.

Whether the Olympic festival was held for the last time in 393, or dragged on to the end of the century, is uncertain, nor does it matter. Attacked by Christianity from within, and by the barbarian invasions from without the Empire, its doom was inevitable. The traditional in-

violability of Elis, based on her time-honoured custody of Olympia, was ended for ever, and part of the former sanctuary was converted into a fortress to protect the inhabitants from the streams of barbarians that were pouring through the broken barriers of the Empire. But Nature herself now lent her energies to the work of destruction. Earthquake and flood were let loose to do their worst, and, until the German excavations began in 1874, the Altis and its ruins, hardly remembered by men, lay buried from 10 to 20 feet deep below the surface of the soil.

Not improbably the oldest form of worship at Olympia, as at Delphi, was that of the Earth-goddess, whose altar, adjoining the Treasury of Sikyon on the west, is still to be seen on the terrace below the Kronion, or Hill of Kronos. Very old, too, was the worship of Artemis, the goddess of the wild, who had no fewer than eight altars in the Altis, and whose cult was almost certainly a survival from pre-Hellenic times, despite the fact that no Mycenaean remains have been found at Olympia. Professor Cook<sup>1</sup> discerns another survival of the Minoan religion in the sacrifice of a boar to Zeus Horkios as a preliminary to the games. On the other hand, the oracle of Zeus, whose mouthpieces continued for centuries to be chosen from the same two ancient families, must have attained celebrity at an extremely remote period. Pindar, who is our oldest authority, ascribes the foundation of the games to the hero Herakles himself, the son of Alkmene, while Pausanias records the rival tradition that the real founder was another Herakles, he of Mount Ida in Crete, one of the five Kouretes who had come specially from Crete to protect the infant Zeus. It was at Olympia that Zeus was said to have wrestled with his father Kronos for the sovereignty, and a shrine on the

<sup>1</sup> *Zeus*, II, i, 727.

summit of the Kronion perpetuated the memory of the older and defeated deity. The second successor of Herakles, according to legend, was Endymion, whose son Epeios was the eponymous ancestor of the Epeans, the earliest Greek settlers in the district.

Between the close of the Mycenaean Age and the rise of a new civilization in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. little is known regarding the history of the Peloponnese. The Dorians, who destroyed the hitherto flourishing civilization of Epirus and Ætolia, did not invade the north-west corner of the peninsula, which instead formed a refuge for Ætolian emigrants. They brought with them the worship of Pelops—a mysterious personage variously explained by modern scholars as a local deity, an eponymous hero, a purely mythical figure invented to explain certain ritual practices, and a genuine local chieftain. One tradition declared that he had originally come from Asia Minor, another claimed him as an Achæan. Whatever the truth may be, his worship was never neglected at Olympia, even though overshadowed by that of the greatest of the gods. A black lamb was annually sacrificed above a trench at his shrine, and no one who had eaten of its flesh might, without purification, enter the temple of Zeus. Annually, too, the Peloponnesian youths flagellated themselves to the blood above his altar, and competitors in the games sacrificed first, not to Zeus, but to Pelops.

The remains of the Pelopeion, a pentagonal enclosure with a portal of unusual form at the south-west angle, may still be traced between the temples of Zeus and Hera. This, however, was not the hero's resting-place. His bones were enclosed in a bronze casket at Pisa, the ancient city which lay eastwards of the Olympic sanctuary, and only a shoulder-blade was preserved at Olympia itself. Even

this, by the time of Pausanias's visit, had long disappeared, though the sword of Pelops was still to be seen in the Treasury of the Sikyonians. The great antiquity of the Pelopeion is shown by the fact that the excavations within it brought to light an immense quantity of votive offerings in bronze and terra-cotta, dating from the most archaic period.

The story of Pelops is closely connected with that of Oinomaos, king of Pisa, a pillar of whose palace was still shown in the time of Pausanias a little to the east of the temple of Zeus. Oinomaos, the son of Ares, and of the Pleiad, Sterope (Lightning), had a daughter, Hippodameia, whose hand was sought by suitors from far and wide. But Oinomaos stipulated that each suitor must first compete with him in a chariot-race from Pisa to Corinth. The suitor, with Hippodameia beside him, started off in advance: if he won, she was to become his bride: if the king overtook him, he should be slain. Thanks to the unmatched fleetness of the king's steeds, many suitors thus perished, till Pelops, by corrupting the king's servant, caused the chariot of Oinomaos to overturn with fatal results. Thereupon he wedded the lady and eventually bequeathed his name to the Peloponnese—"the island of Pelops"—an appellation which, however, had most probably originated in Ætolia, on the other side of the gulf, where the existence of the isthmus at Corinth may in prehistoric times have well been overlooked or unknown.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Oinomaos Professor Cook sees a priest-king who, claiming to be himself the incarnation of Zeus, was slain for his presumption by the god. His house was said to have been destroyed by lightning. Close to the surviving pillar were altars of Zeus Keraunios (the Thunderer) and Zeus Kataibates (He Who Descends, i.e. in rain or lightning). The latter altar was enclosed by railings as a place that had been smitten by a thunderbolt.

The chariot-race between the suitor and his prospective father-in-law lends support to the unanimous Greek tradition that the Olympic contests had existed prior to the Dorian invasion of Greece, but had fallen into oblivion during the ensuing centuries of warfare and unrest. This seems the more likely since the prehistoric stratum at Olympia, as revealed by the German excavators, was found to be separated by a layer of sand from the earliest stratum of votive offerings. A further cause for the cessation of the festival is to be found in the fact that the control of the sanctuary, originally in the hands of Pisa, was coveted by the men of Elis, her northern neighbour, which gave rise to a long and bitter struggle between the two cities.

Peace, at least for a while, was at last restored by Iphitos of Elis, who may have lived as early as the ninth century, though the first Olympiad, with which his name is associated, is usually assigned by tradition to the year 776 B.C. An ancient discus said to have been dedicated by Iphitos was long preserved in the temple of Hera. At the bidding of the Delphic oracle, and aided by Lykourgos<sup>1</sup> of Sparta, the legendary creator of the Spartan constitution, he refounded the games, and instituted a Truce of God by which hostilities among the Greeks were universally suspended during their celebration. The territory of Elis was regarded as sacred to Zeus during the festival, and the introduction of weapons was an act of impiety. None but free-born Hellenes might compete in the games, though non-Hellenes were permitted to look on. Curiously enough, none but unmarried women

<sup>1</sup> Whether Lykourgos ever really existed is very doubtful. Possibly he was in origin a god. He was certainly worshipped at Lacedaimon, and Herodotos (i, 65) quotes an oracle in which Apollo himself declares his belief in the divinity of Lykourgos.

were allowed to attend the festival, with the subsequent exception of the priestess of Demeter, whose temple was next to the Stadion. Married women were forbidden on pain of death even to cross the Alphaios. The festival, which recurred every four years, took place in early autumn, and lasted for five days.

Even in the eighth century the principal events—foot-racing, discus-throwing, hurling the javelin, boxing, wrestling and chariot-racing—seem to have been already established. Very different, however, must have been the appearance of Olympia. Possibly some primitive form of shrine already occupied the site of the future temple of Zeus and Hera: otherwise no temples yet stood within the sacred grove, composed of plane-trees and wild olives, that surrounded the mound of Pelops and the solitary pillar that marked the site of Oinomaos's palace. In the centre of the grove—the site is now marked only by a slight hollow—stood the great altar of Zeus, on which the holy fire burned perpetually. It was a stepped, square structure, formed from the ashes of the thighs of the victims sacrificed to the god: closely resembling, in fact, a series of altar-shaped bronze weights found at Olympia, and inscribed with the god's name, which may actually be models of the altar.<sup>1</sup> Hither came the country-folk to consult the ancient oracle, and suspend their offerings on the surrounding boughs. Hundreds of these crude clay or bronze figures, seemingly intended as fertility charms, have been found, and from the number of offerings of various kinds brought to light in the earliest layer it is clear that the sanctuary was a cult centre for the neighbouring tribes probably as early as the tenth century B.C. All the events, in this early age, were held in the Altis itself, and the finish of the

<sup>1</sup> See H. B. Walters, *Brit. Mus. Cat. Bronzes*.



aces was near the altar of Zeus, where the victors were awarded the crown of wild olive.

By the peace of Iphitos the control of the festival was shared jointly by Elis and Pisa, and presided over together by their respective kings: a custom commemorated in historic times by the royal robes worn by the judges, or Hellanodikai, who were also invested with the highest political powers. But the Eleans, who were the stronger, soon usurped complete control with the assistance of the Spartans. The Pisatans appealed to Sparta's rival, Argos: and the Argive king, Pheidon, promptly marched to their aid and reinstated them in their old supremacy. The celebration of the games at which he presided in person, about the middle of the seventh century, is the first time that the Olympic festival is mentioned in authentic Greek history. It was doubtless to this invasion by Argos that Olympia owed the introduction of the cult of the great Argive goddess, Hera, whose seated image was henceforth to be seen side by side with the upright figure of Zeus in the old temple which at a later period was entirely relinquished to Hera.

The Heraion, or temple of Hera, the most picturesque of all the remains at Olympia, is the oldest temple in all Hellas, though not, as was once supposed, dating from so early as the tenth or eleventh century. On the other hand, the actual temple whose ruins we see to-day cannot, in Professor Dörpfeld's opinion, be later than the seventh century, and may therefore be roughly contemporary with Kylon's conspiracy at Athens and the subsequent expulsion of the Alkmæonids. A singular feature is the marked irregularity displayed by the columns of the peristyle. They vary alike in their flutings, their diameter, and even their material, while the Doric capitals that have been found range from those of the very earliest period to those in

favour during the Empire. The most probable explanation is that all the columns were originally of wood, and were gradually replaced by stone columns in the current mode whenever decay rendered replacement necessary. Even in the time of Pausanias one of these old wooden columns was still in its place in the opisthodomos. At the east end two columns, set up in their original positions, clearly show the oblong holes made in them for the insertion of marble tablets, votive and otherwise, which must have had a decidedly disfiguring effect.

As the upper courses of the cella-walls consisted only of sun-dried brick, they rapidly dissolved into mud and clay under the influence of the weather once the roof had perished, with the result that only the lower courses of stone are left. The interior of the cella was divided by two rows of pillars. On the rectangular base of limestone at the west end stood the two cult images of Zeus and Hera, of which only the head of Hera has survived. It is to be seen in the local museum. Of limestone like the pedestal, it represents the goddess wearing a tall crown above a fillet, below which are a series of curls, originally bright red. The work, though archaic, is full of vigour, but there is little suggestion of divine majesty in the faintly smiling face, whose features are decidedly peasant-like in type.

As might be expected in a temple of such antiquity, the building was filled with votive offerings and works of art of every description. In the opisthodomos were two relics of especial interest—the bronze disk of Iphitos, engraved with the terms of the Peace and the rules of the games, and a wonderful chest of cedarwood ornamented with encircling rows of mythological scenes. Presented, probably, by Periander, the famous tyrant of Corinth in the seventh

century, it was known as the Chest of Kypselos, owing to a legend that the tyrant's father, when an infant, had been concealed in it, when a prophecy of his future greatness had induced the Bacchiad rulers of Corinth to send emissaries to slay him.

The most important artistic discovery made during the excavation of the temple was the world-famous statue of Hermes holding the infant Dionysos in his arms. It is evidently the same statue which Pausanias briefly describes as "a work of Praxiteles in stone," and up to a few years ago was accepted without question as a genuine masterpiece by the great sculptor of the fourth century. More than all else, probably, it has made Olympia the goal of all modern visitors to Greece.

No reproductions [says Sir J. G. Frazer] give an adequate idea of the beauty of the original . . . it seems impossible to conceive that Praxiteles or any other man ever attained to a greater mastery over stone than is exhibited in this astonishing work.

Its beauty, at any rate, if not, unfortunately, its interest, remains unaffected even if one finds oneself compelled to accept the opinion of Professor Carl Blümel,<sup>1</sup> who declares, chiefly on technical grounds, that it is not an original work of Praxiteles, but a Roman copy. A minor puzzle is the question of what Hermes was holding in his right hand, which is now missing. His gaze is fixed on something apparently outside the group, which makes it the less easy to suggest a satisfactory answer to the problem.

In connection with the Heraion, Pausanias tells of a curious discovery. During some repairs to the roof a few years before his visit—so the official guide informed

<sup>1</sup> *Griechische Bildhauerarbeit*, Jahrb. d. Deutsch. Archäol. Inst., 1927 (Erganzungsheft, xi, pp. 37-48).



OLYMPIA: THE TEMPLE OF HERA.



*Photos, by Author.*

OLYMPIA: THE STUDIO OF PHEIDIAS.

girls. The company of matrons, known as the Sixteen Women, may have been "the sacred women of Dionysos, whom they call the Sixteen," who, as Plutarch tells us, chanted every year the curious invitation to Dionysos—

*In spring-time, O Dionysos,  
To thy holy temple come,  
To Elis with thy Graces,  
Rushing with thy bull-foot, come,  
Noble Bull, Noble Bull!*

We know from Pausanias that an altar of Dionysos and the Graces stood close to the Pelopeion, but the connection with the Sixteen Women of Hera is not clear.

Before entering upon their duties, the Sixteen Women had to purify themselves and sacrifice a pig. In addition to weaving a new *peplos* for the goddess, which was solemnly placed upon the statue after every fourth year, they joined in certain mysterious dances, and also presided over games held at regular intervals in Hera's honour. Dressed in short tunics, with the right shoulder bare and their hair hanging loosely down the back, girls ran foot-races, the victor being awarded a crown of olive and allowed to dedicate a statue to Hera.

The Olympian festival by the end of the seventh century had assumed a national character. Competitors from every Hellenic state strove with one another in the Altis, after taking part in the solemn procession which, making its way round the sacred grove, encircled the altar of Zeus, and offered upon it a sacrifice to the god. By the sixth century the Hellanodikai were in communication even with Asia Minor and Egypt, and Herodotos tells how envoys from Elis were dispatched to Egypt to seek suggestions as to the management of the games from the oldest and wisest of

peoples. "Are citizens of Elis allowed to compete?" asked the Egyptians: and on hearing that they were, they replied emphatically that in this respect at any rate the rules required emendation, since, human nature being what it is, the Elean judges must obviously be biased in favour of their fellow-citizens.

The Eleans, however, were themselves already on guard against such a possibility. South of the Altis we can still trace the remains of the Bouleuterion, the seat of the Council which exercised control over the Altis and its edifices. The ground-plan, consisting of two apsidal halls with a courtyard between, is the earliest-known example of the kind in any Greek building: the north hall was probably the council room, while the south wing was most likely added in the fifth century, when the number of the Hellanodikai was raised from two to nine or ten. In the court stood an ancient image of Zeus Horkios, the "god of oaths," grasping a thunderbolt menacingly in each hand. It was evidently an impressive work, and Pausanias indeed declares that it was better calculated to strike terror into evildoers than any other image of Zeus known to him. On the first day of the festival a boar was strangled before it, and on the severed fragments of the animal the Hellanodikai took a solemn oath to judge fairly, to accept no bribes, and to reveal nothing they might know either of victors or vanquished. This done, the competitors and their trainers likewise swore strictly to observe the rules of the contest.

Offenders, however, were not simply abandoned to the vengeance of the god. They had good reason to fear the punishments of the Hellanodikai. "Those who stand up too soon in the games are whipped," was the significant reminder flung at Themistokles by his opponent in the

council of war before Salamis. Other, and especially deliberate, offences were visited by heavy fines, and the money employed in setting up bronze statues of Zeus, which were usually placed in a row on the left of the avenue by which competitors marched into the Stadion. The spectacle of these Zanēs,<sup>1</sup> as they were called, must have acted as a salutary warning to any competitor whose anxiety to win was apt to outweigh his sense of fairness. The bases of many of these statues are still to be seen beside the wall of the terrace, at the foot of the Kronion, whereon stands the long row of treasuries of the various Greek states.

Bribery seems to have been most frequently responsible for the erection of a Zan, but a specially heavy fine was inflicted on an Alexandrian boxer named Apollonios. He had been debarred from the contest, according to the rules, for not appearing at the proper time, but pretended that his ship had been delayed by contrary winds. Herakleides, however, another boxer from Alexandria, gave evidence that he had really been engaged in a prize-fight in Ionia. The rage of Apollonios at this exposure was unbounded, and no sooner had Herakleides been awarded the prize than he rushed at him and tried to knock him down in the very presence of the Hellanodikai. Another Alexandrian, Serapion by name, was so terrified of his antagonists that he bolted the very day before the contest—thus achieving an ignominious notoriety as the only entrant ever fined for cowardice.

In spite of Egyptian cynicism, only once did a citizen of Elis ever prove guilty of sharp practice. Even then it was not one of the Hellanodikai, but the father of a wrestler

<sup>1</sup> For evidence that Zan was really an old Illyrian sky-god superseded by Zeus, see Cook, *Zeus*, II, ii, 340-54.

who had tried bribery in his desire to see his son victorious. The Zan on this occasion was set up in the long colonnade whose scanty remains enclose the Altis on the west. Built in the fourth century, to which period chiefly belong the foundations now visible, it replaced an earlier stoa adorned with paintings. The new portico, from its acoustic properties, was usually called the Echo Colonnade. A word spoken there, says Pausanias, was repeated seven times in succession, or even more.

The Hellanodikai, indeed, seem to have consistently acted with an impartiality beyond all praise. Even on the famous occasion of Nero's visit to Olympia, when he heaped large sums of money on them in reward for his "victories," and made them Roman citizens into the bargain, they are hardly to be blamed for not venturing to affront the vanity of an all-ruler who had never scrupled to put to death those who opposed him. Indeed the whole account of Nero's appearance, as related by Cassius Dio, belongs rather to the region of farcical comedy. He addressed the Hellanodikai in terms of ingratiating deference, protesting that he had done his best to prepare for the ordeal, and that he relied on their acknowledged taste and discrimination to allow no minor defects in his performance to blind them to its superiority as a whole.

Meanwhile, he did not hesitate to annex their official residence at the south-east angle of the Altis, and convert it into a palatial villa for his own use. At the same time, he had a new processional entrance specially made for the Altis, including the triumphal arch whose foundations are to be seen a few yards westward of the imperial residence. His professed reverence for Hellenic culture in general, and for the institutions of Olympia in particular, was also displayed by the confiscation of all such statues as engaged



his fancy, and the removal of portrait statues of previous victors, the presence of which might detract from his own coming triumphs. It must be admitted, however, that Nero was neither the first nor the last to plunder Olympia of its works of art, whose number was indeed almost inexhaustible. Even in the second century the quantity of statues—portraits of successful athletes or votive offerings from states and individuals—was literally enormous, and Pausanias devotes nearly an entire book to their enumeration.

As may be imagined, the prospect of Nero's appearance aroused intense curiosity. An immense throng assembled to witness the spectacle. Quivering with a nervousness that not even his insane vanity could overcome, the imperial buffoon shuffled on to the stage. Beads of perspiration bedewed his puffy features, but the rules of dramatic delivery forbade him to wipe his face, or even to blow his nose. His legs ached with fatigue, as his interminable series of songs and recitations dragged relentlessly on, but it was against the rules to sit down—let them ache! A dreadful moment occurred when he dropped the property staff which he was holding. He was in a panic lest the accident should cost him the prize, but his accompanist swore that everyone had been too absorbed in his marvellous voice even to notice the mishap.

Prize after prize was inevitably awarded him, and the delighted Nero, shoving the official herald aside, announced his own victories in the tones of a squeaky Stentor. Most ludicrous of all, however, must have been the famous chariot-race, in which Nero, contrary to all precedent, appeared in a chariot drawn by ten horses. Thrown out, picked up again, starting off once more, he failed to finish the course, but was none the less declared the winner! With the

invincible amusement which the whole affair must have afforded the Greeks, was mingled an angry resentment at the profanation of their ancient and most sacred festival. On Nero's death everything possible was done to wipe out the memory of the scandal. The records of the Olympiad were expunged from the Register: the Hellanodikai were made to give up the money bestowed on them: and even the new triumphal entrance was disused, and the processions, as of old, entered by the earlier gateway whose remains are still to be seen at the south-western angle of the Altis.

It is time, however, to turn our attention to the great temple of Zeus. Earthquake and spoliation have reduced it to little more than the stylobate, which is constructed of huge quadrangular blocks of that curious shell-conglomerate, so characteristic of Olympic architecture. It might well be regarded as the cenotaph of Pisa: for on the decline of the Argive power in the fifth century, the Eleans once more asserted their claim to supreme control of the festival, and in the ensuing struggle Pisa was utterly destroyed. More than a century afterwards the stones of the hapless city were carried off to build the new temple of Zeus, the old temple being henceforth resigned to Hera.

Only once henceforward was the supremacy of Elis at Olympia challenged, when in 364, under pretence of restoring the rights of the exiled Pisatans, the Arkadians seized the sanctuary and fortified themselves on the Kronion. The games were actually in progress when the Elean army was seen marching up to the bank of the Kladeos, which then occupied a channel somewhat more to the west. The Arkadian troops took up their position on the opposite bank, but the Eleans, with unexpected vigour, charged

across the stream, and drove back the enemy into the Altis. It was only after a desperate struggle in the space between the temple of Zeus and the Bouleuterion that the Eleans were compelled to fall back across the Kladeos. They had lost their commander, and as the Arkadians now fortified the Altis too strongly to make a second attempt feasible, the Eleans had to return home. But the public opinion of Greece as a whole was on their side, especially as the Arkadians took to plundering the sacred treasures in order to pay their troops, and two years later their rights were restored to them.

Designed by an Elean architect named Libon, the temple was completed some time before 456 B.C. The lines of the stylobate,  $210\frac{1}{4}$  feet in length by  $90\frac{3}{4}$  feet wide, show none of the skilful curvature introduced by Iktinos in the Parthenon. The cella was surrounded by a peristyle whose columns—six at each end and thirteen along each side—were  $34\frac{1}{4}$  feet high and  $7\frac{1}{3}$  feet in diameter at the base. Covered with a stucco which had all the hardness and brilliance of actual marble, they were decorated by rings of red on the necks and capitals, while blue and red were also employed on the architrave and in the triglyphs.

The pediment sculptures from the temple are now in the local museum. Much controversy, on which I need not expatiate here, has been provoked by Pausanias' statement that those of the east gable were by Paionios, and those of the west by Alkamenes. This ascription has generally been rejected on various grounds: and the close resemblance in style of both groups, as well as their complete dissimilarity from the sculptures of the Parthenon, has supplied most critics with reasons for thinking that both the pediment sculptures and the metopes—likewise in the

museum—are the work of a native Elean school, which possibly derived its inspiration from the school of Sikyon or Argos.<sup>1</sup> H. Schrader, however, in his study of Pheidias, goes far to rehabilitate Pausanias. He brings forward evidence to prove that Paionios had made his model for the east pediment sculptures about 475 B.C., and that Alkamenes executed three figures for the west pediment, which are distinguishable from the rest since they are in Pentelic marble.

As to the merits of the pediment groups, opinions vary considerably. Sir J. G. Frazer considers the sculptures disappointing. Professor P. Gardner<sup>2</sup> inveighs against the numberless faults of execution “which in our day an inferior sculptor would not commit,” and condemns the heads as “repellent, if not absolutely repulsive.” On the other hand, Mr. E. Norman Gardiner, while recognizing the ineffectiveness evinced in the modelling of drapery and in the representation of horses and of the centaurs, points out that many of these defects are simply due to an economy of labour by which parts invisible to a spectator were neglected, while other details were supplied in colour which is now lost. Nor, he reminds us, do we to-day see the figures as they were meant to be seen—not level with our eyes, but raised high above the pillars of the portico: a position in which a certain roughness and boldness of execution is far more effective than elaborate finish.

In the eastern pediment is represented the contest between Pelops and Oinomaos. Between the two protagonists, though probably unseen by them, stands Zeus, “the giver of victory and arbiter of strife.” His head is now missing,

<sup>1</sup> Frazer, *Pausanias*, III, 512–15; E. Norman Gardiner, *Olympia*, 259–61.

<sup>2</sup> *New Chapters in Greek History*, 279 f.

but was evidently turned benevolently in the direction of Pelops. Figures of the river deities, Alpheios and Kladeos, watch the scene intently from the angles where they recline, while among the figures on the right sits an aged seer, whose features, saddened by vain foreknowledge, seem to reflect the coming fate of the king. Turning to the western pediment,

What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?  
What wild pursuit? What struggles to escape?

Here we have no local legend, but the story of the attempt by the centaurs to carry off the bride, Deidameia, at the wedding feast of Peirithoos, king of the Lapiths in Thessaly. In the midst, dominating the struggle, Apollo towers in divine majesty, his right hand imperiously extended as though dooming the drunken author of the attempted outrage. Next to him, Peirithoos, of whose figure only some few fragments remain, was shown springing to his bride's rescue, his sword uplifted to strike, while on the god's right Theseus, who had been invited to the feast, lays about him with a double axe. In the groups to right and left Lapiths grapple with the ravishers and strive to rescue the women whom they would fain drag away, while other women, escaped from the mellay, watch the battle with keen anxiety from the angles.<sup>1</sup>

In both pediments one is at once impressed by the remarkable skill displayed in the modelling of the nude, in which the heaviness and exaggeration so often evident in archaic sculpture, as in the pediment sculptures from Ægina, are almost entirely absent. The faces, moreover, are both individual and realistic. Furthermore, as Mr. Gardiner

<sup>1</sup> The arrangement here followed is that of Treu. Schrader's proposed arrangement of the figures differs in important respects.

points out, "the very spirit of Olympic religion and of the Olympic games" is embodied in these sculptures. On the one pediment, with its reminder of the chariot races and their ancient origin, are Zeus, lord alike of Olympia and of Hellas, Pelops, whose cult was perhaps as old as that of Zeus himself, and Oinomaos, who may possibly represent an older worship than either. On the other, we see the untrained brutality of the barbarian vanquished by the representatives of Hellenic athleticism, who are aided by Theseus and Apollo.

Of the metopes, representing the labours of Herakles, and all more or less mutilated, many of the most important fragments are in the Louvre. Though evidently the work of the same artist or group of artists who are responsible for the pediments, they display a greater degree of finish, while they are usually free from the more conspicuous defects of the larger sculptures.

A broad ramp on the east, with narrow steps on either side, led up to the peristyle, which was crowded with statues and other offerings. Three massive bronze doors gave admission to the pronaos, whose pavement bore a mosaic design in river pebbles—probably the earliest Greek mosaic still in existence. The interior of the cella, lighted only by the great doorway, which measured 15 feet across, was flanked on each side by seven Doric columns: above these were galleries reached by winding staircases in the angles, and containing a second row of smaller columns. All round the cella ran a sort of ambulatory, to enable visitors to inspect the wonderful image of Zeus, the greatest masterpiece of Pheidias, though a stone barrier prevented them from approaching it too closely. In front of the statue was a black stone pavement with a white marble gutter, to catch the oil used to preserve it. The office of cleaning,

oiling and polishing the statue was hereditary in the great sculptor's family, and the base of a statue of one of these "Burnishers," as they were called, still exists.

The statue of Zeus was begun by Pheidias perhaps in 438, perhaps—as Schrader believes—in 460 B.C. His studio was still in existence six centuries later, and from Pausanias' account it can be identified with almost complete certainty with the fifth-century hall converted later into a Byzantine church, which stands nearly opposite the opisthodomos. Almost the same size as the cella of the temple, it was divided into two rooms with a door between them, and, like the cella, had side galleries supported upon pillars. It was thus thoroughly suitable for the setting-up of the colossal image, while the foundations, on the south, of a long, narrow building divided into a series of small rooms are probably those of the atelier in which his assistants executed the various sections of the work.

Wrought in ivory and gold, and nearly 40 feet in height, excluding the pedestal, the statue was regarded throughout antiquity as one of the seven wonders of the world. Bearded, his brows enwreathed with olive, the god sat enthroned, carrying a Victory—likewise chryselephantine—in his right hand, and a sceptre crowned with an eagle and made of divers metals in his left. His golden robe was exquisitely enwrought with sacral lilies and animals. Pheidias himself, when questioned by his nephew, Panainos, is said to have replied that his aim was to represent the god as described by Homer in the *Iliad* (i, 537 ff.)—

*Thus spake the son  
Of Kronos, nodding his dark brow; his locks  
Ambrosial waved on his immortal head,  
And all Olympos trembled.*

But the descriptions of ancient observers, while they emphasize the immensity of our loss, prove that the conception of the sculptor was far greater and nobler than the model which he professed to follow. It was, indeed, regarded as a heavy misfortune to die without having beheld it. The Roman general, Æmilius Paullus, declared that he had felt as though in the presence of God himself. "The most beautiful image on earth," is the verdict of Dio Chrysostom:

Methinks [he continues, in a passage of singular beauty], if one who is heavy laden in mind, who has drained the cup of misfortune and sorrow in life, and whom sleep visits no more, were to stand before this image, he would forget all the griefs and troubles that are incident to the life of man.

The accessories of this superb creation were naturally on a similar scale of splendour. The throne of Zeus was of gold, ivory and ebony, and was still further enriched by jewels. Victories adorned the legs, while crouching Sphinxes composed the arms. To support the immense weight of the image, it was strengthened not only by cross-bars, but by four pillars—concealed by screens—under the centre of the seat. The panels enclosed by the cross-bars were decorated by Panainos with paintings executed on a dark-blue ground, while scenes in gold relief adorned the bars themselves. Golden lions on either side upheld the god's footstool, which bore a relief representing the legendary warfare of Theseus and the Athenians against the Amazons.

It was not every day that the great image could be seen. On certain occasions it was screened from public view by a scarlet or purple curtain, woven of the finest wool, which was let down from the roof. This curtain was a donation from the Macedonian king of Syria, Antiochos Epiphanes,



and is believed—strange as it seems—to have once been the Veil of the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Solomon at Jerusalem, which had been plundered by Antiochos. Caligula, it is said, conceived the idea of removing the statue to Rome and substituting his own head for that of Zeus, but the ship in which it was proposed to transport it was destroyed by lightning. It was even told how the imperial commissioners, on entering the temple, were terrified and abashed by a loud outburst of contemptuous laughter apparently proceeding from the statue's lips. Undisturbed for nearly eight hundred years, it appears at length to have been transferred by Constantine to Constantinople on the closing of all pagan temples at the end of the fourth century A.D.: and there, by a supreme calamity, it was destroyed by fire in 475 together with the palace containing it. Unlike the master's statue of the Parthenos, no copy of the Pheidian Zeus has been transmitted to our day. A fresco found at Eleusis in 1888 appears to have included a representation of the figure, but unhappily the head had been almost entirely effaced.

The opisthodomos of the temple, which was provided with a stone bench, served as a kind of hall for lectures and recitations. It was here that Herodotos, by way of gaining publicity for his work, read part of it aloud to the Greeks who had come to Olympia for the festival. Among them, it is said, was Thucydides, then a mere youth, in whom the example of Herodotos implanted an ambition which was to bear fruit in his history of the Peloponnesian War. The Olympic festival, indeed, offered the best possible opportunity for advertisement. The mathematician Oinopides, by way of making his talents known, set up at Olympia a tablet engraved with a diagram illustrating his theory of the Great Year, and the famous painter, Zeuxis, even went

to the length of wearing a robe with his name conspicuously embroidered on it in gold letters.

Only one of the innumerable statues that crowded the area before the temple has come down to us. Close to the south-east angle of the great platform is a tall triangular pedestal, once the support of the figure of Nike by Paionios, which, despite its mutilated condition, is one of the chief treasures of the local museum. The original inscription states that the people of Messene and of Naupaktos—the latter famous in modern history under its Italian name of Lepanto—dedicated the statue to Zeus as a tithe from their enemies: a reference, possibly, to the famous episode of Sphakteria, in 425, when the surrender of a body of Spartan hoplites after a gallant defence against greatly superior forces first impaired the general belief in Sparta's invincibility. Poised on the back of an eagle, the lovely figure of the goddess appeared to be sweeping downwards with outspread wings through the azure gulfs of air: her filmy raiment pressed against her rounded limbs and body by the rushing wind, and fluttering wildly behind her. The impression of actual flight is, even to-day, wonderfully vivid.

Behind the opisthodomos the wild olive-trees still, as of old, rustle their silvery-grey leaves. Ancient indeed is their ancestry. Even in the days of Iphitos many wild olives already grew within the precincts. Hitherto no crowns had been awarded to victors in the games, but Iphitos personally consulted the Delphic oracle, and was told to make crowns of wild olive taken from a tree which he should find wreathed with spiders' webs. This venerable tree, still growing near the opisthodomos in the time of Pausanias, was known as the Olive of the Fair Crown, and was protected by a wall. The branches for the crowns

were cut with a golden sickle by a boy with both parents living, and a legend at least as old as Pindar asserted that the olive had been introduced into Olympia by Herakles from the land of the Hyperboreans.

Of primitive religion at Olympia perhaps the most curious survival was the annual sacrifice to Zeus Apomyios—"the Averter"—as a means of banishing the flies which are still an almost intolerable plague in summer. Ælian, in his work on zoology, gravely commends the flies of Olympia: during the festival, he asserts, they were wont to retire beyond the Alpheios out of pure piety, whereas the flies of Leukas, callous to all loftier considerations, had to be bribed to go away by the sacrifice of an ox. But the truth is that the Olympic flies were no better than others, for we know from another and earlier source that for them too an ox was slaughtered, and that only when they were fully glutted with the blood would they consent to withdraw. The expediency of the sacrifice is no less obvious than that it had originated in an age when the flies themselves were regarded as supernatural beings who must be placated by offerings. The belief gradually died out, but the sacrifice went on: dedicated, however, not to the flies, but—by a curious reversal of the point of view—to the god who was entreated to drive them away.<sup>1</sup>

The religious and political centre of Olympia was, of course, the Prytaneion, whose scanty remains lie immediately to the north-west of the Heraion. Here was the hearth of Hestia, where the sacred fire was rekindled in ritual fashion every year: and here, after the pouring of libations and the chanting of hymns, the great procession on the

<sup>1</sup> With Zeus the Averter of Flies one may compare the Philistine god, Baal-zebub, a name which literally means "Lord of Flies." See Frazer, *Pausanias*, III, 558-9; Cook, *Zeus*, II, ii, 781-3.

third day of the festival started off for the altar of Zeus. Victors in the games were feasted in the Prytaneion, and the priestly officials, who were the prytanies, or chief magistrates, of Olympia, probably had the right of dining regularly there. Though no actual date can be determined for the building, it is probably one of the oldest in the sanctuary. The antiquity of its origin is revealed by the fact that clamps of iron—a metal ritually *tabu* since the days of the Bronze Age—were never used, even under the Empire, in the construction of the walls.

Of the various other buildings in the Altis, by far the most important is one which marked the beginning of a new era both for Olympia and for Greece. This is the temple dedicated to Philip II of Macedon, whose real greatness as soldier and statesman is too often overshadowed by the dazzling exploits of Alexander, that *stupor mundi* of antiquity. A circular structure approached by three marble steps, it was encircled by a peristyle of Ionic columns, and crowned by a conical roof whose beams were held together at the top by a bronze poppy. The interior of the building, adorned by Corinthian columns, contained a semicircular base of marble, on which stood statues of Philip and Alexander in ivory and gold, the work of Leochares. They were accompanied by images of Philip's nephew, Amyntas, the boy-king whom Philip had put aside, and his consort, Eurydike, as well as of Alexander's mother, Olympias, the fierce Epirote princess who had avenged herself for her divorce by contriving Philip's assassination. The murder took place in 336: probably the Philippeion, though completed by Alexander, had been begun by Philip himself in the previous year, when he was preparing for his intended invasion of the Persian empire.

It is doubtful whether Alexander himself ever visited

Olympia: he certainly did not, as Philip had done, send horses and chariots to compete there, and when a friend once asked if he would not enter for the foot-race, he replied proudly that he would do so if he had kings for competitors. On the other hand, he was well aware of the importance of Olympia, and utilized it to the full as a means of reconciling Greek public opinion. Reports of his campaigns were regularly dispatched thither by him to be published and recorded, and it was there in 324 that his decree was proclaimed, bidding the various Greek states acknowledge his divinity and recall their exiles, of whom twenty thousand are said to have been actually present on the occasion.

The dedication of the Philippeion was but one manifestation of the remarkable building activity which set in at Olympia in consequence of the rise of Macedon to the hegemony of Greece. For the first time the Altis was enclosed with a stone wall: the palæstra and the gymnasium were constructed, and the stadion remodelled. The Theokoleon was built as a residence for the priests, and the old painted stoa replaced by the Echo Colonnade, while south of the Bouleuterion arose a large portico overlooking the Alpheios valley. To the same period must be assigned the large hospice for distinguished visitors which a wealthy citizen of Naxos, named Leonidas, erected outside the south-western gate of the Altis, and which, rebuilt, or at least restored, in Roman times, became the official residence of the Roman governor.

\* \* \* \* \*

Before bidding farewell to Olympia, I was invited by the proprietor of the hotel to contribute, as was customary, to the visitors' book, which contained entries in every

language under the sun, from Scandinavian to Japanese. Almost the first signature on which my glance alighted was that of "Michelangelo Buonaroti (*sic*), Roma." *Ben trovato*, indeed! I scanned the page with interest, wondering if the master had recorded his views regarding the authenticity of the Hermes of Praxiteles, but beyond the signature—which I recommend to the notice of spiritualists—there was not a word.

Other and less distinguished visitors, on the other hand, knew no such reticence. There were the alumni—many of them feminine—of an American missionary college, who showed an irrepressible tendency to burst into lyrical apostrophes to Greece. There was the lady who congratulated the hotel on its freedom from bugs, and the other lady who said it was all very nice, and she supposed the smells were just part of the general atmosphere, and the explosive male who had written, "A table for a bed—forty howling girls—O God, why go on?" and the more resigned traveller whose sole comment was, *Forsan et hæc olim meminisse iuvabit*. Best of all I liked the naïve testimonials of two Greek visitors, who, one guesses, had recently returned from sojourning in the U.S.A., and welcomed the opportunity to display their easy mastery of the English idiom. Here they are, word for word:

I recoment Mr. — (*the landlord*) as the best man on the Olympia his services are splendid and is very polite to his customers I greet everybody whos visiting the Encient Olympia.

This landscape of olynpi is the best of all Greece. We saw all roun hear and we wer were plenty of please I am her with my wife from ithéque (? *Ithaca*).

As I closed the book, I reflected that this last expression of opinion, *mutatis mutandis*, was not far removed from

that of another Greek traveller, some 1,800 years previously, who wrote in his description of Greece:

*Many a wondrous sight may be seen, and not a few tales of wonder may be heard in Greece: but there is nothing on which the blessing of God rests in so full a measure as the rites of Eleusis and the Olympian games.*

## CHAPTER XI

### KNOSSOS

THE night was dark, though the stars twinkled in a cloudless sky and beyond the eastern horizon the young moon already pushed forth a slim silver horn. The other passengers had mostly retired, and as I leaned on the taffrail, while the wind ruffled my hair with its cool fingers, I had the deck wholly to myself. The occasional patches of foam, dimly seen for a moment alongside in the faint light cast by a porthole, were like pale hands that waved or beckoned, just as they had done to countless myriads of other ships, from the galleys of the early Bronze Age down to the newest creations of the age of steel. All of them had sailed this same *Ægean Sea*—a sea of dreams and legends—the cradle of *Aphrodite*, the grave of *Icarus*. Within its blue waves *Britomart* had plunged to escape the embraces of *Zeus*, and over them the divine Bull had borne the rapt *Europa*. Here *Odysseus* had wandered in his hollow ship, and *Ariadne* had fled with *Theseus* from the vengeance of *Minos*, Lord of the labyrinth.

Somewhere in the darkness ahead lay *Crete*, that most mysterious of all islands, where the strangest tales, one feels, may somehow be true. To this day the shepherds in the neighbourhood of *Sphakià* tell of ghostly warriors seen by them year by year—the *Drosoulites*, or *Dew-Folk*, that reel to and fro in wild affray in the misty twilight



of a May morning.<sup>1</sup> Even stranger is the tale told to an English traveller in the last century, of how two Sphakiote hunters, roaming the mountains on a moonlight night, beheld a long train of shining forms, unearthly in their beauty, who passed by singing:

*We go, we go  
To fetch the lady bride,  
From the steep rock,  
A solitary nymph.*

Terrified by the apparition, the men fired, whereupon a cry arose, "They've murdered our bridegroom! They've murdered our bridegroom!" and wailing and shrieking the phantoms fled away.<sup>2</sup> . . .

By about ten o'clock next morning the snowy summit of Mount Ida could be seen, floating, like the enchanted island of Laputa, above the wreathed mists. Somewhere on the flanks of the mountain one may yet penetrate the cavern where, according to Cretan legend, the infant Zeus—born in the bee-haunted Diktæan cave—was nursed by the nymphs and the Kouretes. This Cretan Zeus—a very different being in origin from the great Sky-God with whom the Greeks subsequently identified him—was mortally stricken by the tushes of a wild boar, and buried on Mount Juktas, which rises conspicuously southward of Knossos. A Mycenaean signet shows us the boy-god's grave, with his Divine Mother bending above it in sorrow, and his little shield suspended below.<sup>3</sup> It is clear that his position

<sup>1</sup> See R. M. Dawkins, *Folk Memory in Crete*, Folk Lore, XLI, i (1930).

<sup>2</sup> J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*.

<sup>3</sup> Evans, *Palace of Minos*, I, 161-2; III, 484. For the remarkable ivory figure of the boy-god, believed by Sir Arthur Evans to have

in regard to the great goddess of Minoan Crete is comparable to that of Adonis to Aphrodite or Tammuz to Ishtar, while, as with them, the celebration which signalized his annual death and resurrection were simply the perpetuation of magical rites for the purpose of reviving all living things. His relation to the goddess, however, was undoubtedly that of a son rather than of a consort or paramour. A painted clay image from a late Minoan tomb at Knossos represents the goddess elevating her infant son in her arms for the adoration of worshippers, and on a gold signet from Thisbe in Boeotia she is seen enthroned, like the Virgin in Christian iconography, with her Divine Son standing on her knee, while two armed male figures, whose offerings are shown behind them, stand adoringly before her.<sup>1</sup>

Down to the fourth century of our own era the grave of Zeus on Mount Juktas was still shown and revered. Even to-day the remains of the sanctuary, enclosed within a wall of cyclopean masonry, and resembling a primitive house—a kind of *Casa Santa*—are said to be called by the peasantry “the tomb of Zeus.” But the Hellenic world as a whole had long outgrown the primitive stage of religion at which gods die and are buried like ordinary folk, and the claim to possess the tomb of Zeus merely earned for the Cretans among orthodox pagans the unfavourable reputation familiar to us from St. Paul.<sup>2</sup> Three centuries earlier the Alexandrian poet, Kallimachos, had expressly formulated the charge and its basis—

been united with the chryselephantine image of the goddess at Boston in a single group representing the Son adoring his Divine Mother, see *id.*, III, 438 ff.

<sup>1</sup> Evans, *Palace of Minos*, III, 469 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Titus* i. 12, 13.

*Cretans were ever liars,  
for a tomb, forsooth, O King,  
have they raised for thee,  
who diest not  
but livest for ever.*

Yet the choice of Mount Juktas for the god's burial place was doubtless dictated by nature herself. Viewed from the west especially, the mountain outlines itself against the sky in the unmistakable semblance of a titanic human profile, or rather not human, but divine—the actual features of the god, calmly supine in death. The illusion is extraordinarily impressive, and one has no difficulty in comprehending the effect which it must have made upon the primitive mind.

Well before noon the steamer had reached the port of Candia, and lay tranquilly in the roadstead beyond the old Venetian fortifications of the harbour,<sup>1</sup> while the passengers disembarked in boats. A dusty and tumble-down picturesque characterizes Candia, which is far more Oriental than Greek. The Turks, who succeeded the Venetians in the seventeenth century after one of the longest sieges in history, held the island for nearly three hundred years, and relinquished it at last only after a protracted series of struggles marked on both sides by almost inconceivable atrocities. The streets are filled with men in the distinctive Cretan dress, their swarthy features adorned with huge brigand-like moustachios, while the lions of the old Morosini fountain, which would be far more at home in some pigeon-haunted piazza of *seicento* Venice, form a strange contrast

<sup>1</sup> This, to some extent, probably represents the ancient seaport of Knossos. Many blocks of Minoan workmanship are still visible, and the Venetian wharves rest upon the earlier moles.

to the queer little Eastern shops, and the latticed *harem*-windows behind which Turkish women once passed lives of cowlike dullness, enlivened perhaps by an occasional intrigue.

Three and a half miles south of the town is Knossos, the palace and city of King Minos. After more than a quarter of a century of tireless labour and ingenuity, the work of excavating and, to some extent, of restoring the remains is now practically completed. The earliest palace, built about twenty-two centuries before Christ, was destroyed by a great earthquake about 1700 B.C. A new palace was immediately built on a larger scale, which was remodelled on lines of even greater magnificence at the end of the sixteenth century—only to perish finally in 1450 B.C. at the hands of unknown raiders, perhaps from Mycenæ, after roundly half a century of unexampled brilliance. The excavations have revealed important remains of all three periods. Of the city itself, on the other hand, have been found no remains comparable to those of Gournia, at the east end of the island, where one may tread the actual pavements, and explore the very shops and dwelling-places, of a Minoan town eighteen or nineteen centuries before the dawn of our own era. One such house, evidently that of a carpenter, still contained his complete outfit—saws, chisels, awls and nails—just as they had been left by their owner when he fled before the destroyers of his city.

What Knossos itself was like, however, we may judge from a remarkable series of faience plaques found among the ruins of the palace. Originally, perhaps, they served as inlay for a chest, like the inlaid panels that adorned the so-called Chest of Kypselos at Olympia. Numerous fragments representing marching or fighting warriors, trees,

streams and domestic animals, suggest that the composition in its complete state depicted some important event in Minoan military history—perhaps such a siege as is shown on the fragment of a silver rhyton found at Mycenæ and now in the National Museum at Athens. In addition to these, however, there are the miniature façades of about forty houses, several stories in height, and built, apparently, of stone and timber. They have windows of from four to six panes—some even diamond-latticed—and flat terrace-roofs: their fronts are painted in broad bands of colour, like houses in many Mediterranean towns at the present day. The streets of a Minoan city must have presented a curiously modern aspect. Towers and gateways are also shown, for though the palace of Knossos, at least in its later stages, was unfortified, the art of civic fortification was by no means neglected in Crete at this time. Indeed a clay sealing from Zakro in eastern Crete shows us a castle whose massive round towers might almost have been borrowed from Chateau Gaillard.

Few places, if any, are more pregnant with interest and that rather indefinable quality which one calls “atmosphere” than the great palace of Minos,<sup>1</sup> the myth-enshrouded monarch whom Hellenic legend regarded as the son of Zeus and Europa—herself, probably, a primitive Earth-goddess.<sup>2</sup> His consort, Pasiphæ, “the All-Illuminating,” his daughter Ariadne, “the All-Holy,” are evidently mere alternative forms of the pre-Hellenic Mother-Goddess herself, the Rhea of the Greeks, of whom he was not only the high-priest but probably the adopted Son on earth. The palace of Knossos was her chief sanctuary, and her symbols are everywhere found upon its walls, especially that of the

<sup>1</sup> Apparently, like that of Pharaoh, a dynastic title.

<sup>2</sup> Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, II, 479.

Double Axe,<sup>1</sup> which is her principal aniconic form. The exceeding frequency of this symbol has led Sir Arthur Evans to identify the palace itself as the fabulous Labyrinth in which lurked the Minotaur slain by Theseus: for *labrys* is simply a pre-Hellenic word meaning "double axe," and *-nthos* a pre-Hellenic place-ending, which we find surviving also on the mainland, e.g. at Corinth (*Korinthos*). At the same time, among the fallen plaster in one of the palace corridors were discovered remains of an elaborate maze pattern based on the swastika, which may well have clung to the ruined walls long enough to have attracted the attention of the earliest Greek settlers, and thus suggested the fantasy of the monster's "labyrinthine" lair, from which the hero extricated himself and his companions by means of the thread furnished him by Ariadne.

A little to the north-west of the palace is the so-called Theatral Area—a paved space, backed on two sides by tiers of seats at right angles to one another, with a central bastion which may have served as a royal box. One is inevitably reminded of the dancing-place which, as Homer tells us in the *Iliad*, Daidalos "wrought in Knossos broad For fair-haired Ariadne": and it is probable that the Theatral Area was actually the scene of mimetic dances, of a ritual or magical character, performed in the presence of the Priest-King and his court. Similar dances, deriving, apparently, from the dances of Knossos, were still performed in later times, such as the "Crane Dance" of the Delians, and even the dance, full of turns and twists, which Eustathios, bishop of Salonika in the twelfth century, says was still performed by old-fashioned folk, especially sailors, in his own day. There is reason to suppose that the dancers of

<sup>1</sup> For the connection of the Double Axe (*labrys*) with the *labarum*, the sacred emblem adopted by Constantine, see Cook, *Zeus*, II, i.

Knossos mimicked the movements of the sun in the sky, no doubt by way of assisting the luminary in his course, and it is even probable that the ground was marked out for their guidance in an elaborate meander, based, like that of the fresco referred to above, on the ancient sun-symbol of the swastika. Remains of a fresco painted in miniature style show us groups of women engaged in what may be this very dance, while a great throng of men and women watch excitedly from beyond the wall of an enclosure, which contains a grove—doubtless sacred—of olive-trees. The central feature of the rite may well have been the sacrifice of a victim—originally human, subsequently bovine—by the “Minotaur”: that is to say, accepting Professor Cook’s ingenious theory of that monster, by the King’s son in ritual attire, wearing a bull-mask to denote his solar character.<sup>1</sup> So large an audience, however, obviously could not have been accommodated on the seats of the Theatral Area, where there is room only for about five hundred; and Sir Arthur Evans accordingly suggests the level space, close to the Kairatos, at the east foot of the knoll on which the palace stands.

The sacrifice of a bull as a definite feature of Minoan ritual in regard to the dead is illustrated by a painted sarcophagos from Hagia Triada, now in the Candia Museum, where we see him trussed upon the altar, with the blood streaming from his throat. A priestess, attired in the skin of some animal whose tail hangs down behind her, makes offering before a Double Axe, its shaft wreathed with leaves, on which perches a raven-like bird to denote its possession by the deity. On the opposite face of the sarcophagus a similarly attired priestess pours a libation between two reduplicated Double Axes, while the spirit of the dead

<sup>1</sup> *Zeus*, I, 472 ff.; Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, “The Dying God,” 77.

man, standing before the door of his tomb, regards with spectral impassivity the funeral offerings which attendants are bringing, including the ship for his journey to the other world. Possibly we have here evidence of worship regularly offered to the spirits of dead and gone Priest-Kings. In any event, the Minoan abode of spirits was no such twilight place of melancholy, haunted by mere "strengthless heads"—ἀμενημὰ κάρηνα—as that visited by Odysseus, but a land of warmth and sunshine where the lovers whom death had parted were reunited in more than earthly bliss.<sup>1</sup>

To return, however, to the bull, whose massive frame, great strength and unsurpassed generative capacity pre-eminently adapt him to embody the fertilizing power of nature, as personified by the Mother Goddess, in Minoan art and ritual. The restoration of one of the twin porticoes crowning the flanking bastions of the sloping way which ascends from the outer guard-house and the colonnades facing it to the principal entrance of the palace on the north includes a superb relief of an immense urus bull charging wildly with lowered horns. Before him an olive-tree extends its leafy branches, while the rocky ground—evidently a kind of conglomerate or "pudding-stone"—is, by a curious convention, depicted in section. The fragments of the original relief, in the Candia Museum, were found at a level indicating that it must have been still in place when the earliest Achæans settled on the neighbouring site of the former town. No doubt it too contributed to the growth of the legend of the Minotaur and its victims. Of the complementary relief which faced it from the opposite portico—of which even the supporting bastion has been almost wholly destroyed for the sake of its material—little has been found: but it is clear that these reliefs supplied

<sup>1</sup> Evans, *The Ring of Nestor*, 1925.



the prototypes of a whole series of later designs, depicting the hunting of wild bulls and their capture by means of a decoy cow, the best example of which is seen on the two gold cups from Vapheio in Sparta which are now in the Museum at Athens.

Most remarkable of all the Minoan festivals were the "bull-leapings," intended probably to induce fertility in the youth of Knossos by bringing them into direct contact with the horns of the fertilizing animal. Nude save for a loin-cloth, young men and girls of high social standing—the girls, for greater dignity, wearing the *penistache* or codpiece which was an invariable feature of male Minoan attire—coolly awaited the charge of the maddened beast, and firmly grasping the huge horns somersaulted on to its broad back, whence they sprang safely to the ground behind it. Several ivory figurines, of beautiful craftsmanship, have been found, which evidently represent these Minoan "cowboys" in their perilous act. In one of the palace frescoes we see a youth "snapped" in the very act of vaulting over the bull's back to be caught by a girl standing behind it, while another girl has just seized the terrible horns, and in another moment will be tossed high over the beast's head.

In yet another fresco, painted in miniature style, we are treated to the onlooker's point of view. Within a kind of grand-stand a number of Court ladies, elegantly coiffured, with wasp waists and puffed sleeves and chemises—apparently—of some transparent material, sit lightheartedly gossiping of frocks and scandals. So smart, so *dégagées*, are these charming women, so modern the suggestion which they convey, that it is strange to think that the scene is laid, not at Lord's or the opera, but in a Bronze Age palace more than three thousand years ago. Other ladies, in somewhat less elaborate toilettes, stand to right and left

on flights of stairs resembling the large Stepped Porch on the west side of the central court, while above and below is a dense crowd of spectators, both men and women. The religious character of the spectacle is shown by the prominence assigned to a curious shrine in the very centre of the fresco, in which we see the bætylic pillars of the goddess rising between "horns of consecration," which are ranged also along the top of the shrine.

Great indeed must have been the throngs of pilgrims who travelled to the sanctuary, as our own pilgrims travelled to Walsingham or Canterbury, along the stone-paved roads which radiated from Knossos to Phaistos and other important centres. Models and statuettes in terra-cotta help us to visualize them on their journey—the wealthy borne by slaves in palanquins, the poor man seated on a donkey or sharing with several others a four-wheeled cart drawn by oxen. Close to the northern entrance of the palace is a pillared tank, approached by a broad flight of steps, in which the pilgrims probably underwent some kind of initiation before entering the sanctuary. It is possible that many of the humbler devotees passed the night in the shelter of the colonnade facing the outer guard-house, or even in the outer courts of the great palace. Others, no doubt, found lodging in the town, while for those in better circumstances there was the delightful little building, across the valley southward of the palace, which has been named "the Caravanserai." Fronted by a yard giving on the main road to Phaistos, it was built in two stories, with living-rooms, kitchens, stabling, and hot and cold bathing facilities, and may well have been a pious foundation, like the Leonidaion at Olympia. Of the two apartments which have been carefully restored, the first contains a rectangular basin in the floor, where the weary arrival might bathe

his dusty feet and legs. Adjoining it is an elegant little refectory, adorned with a frieze of partridges and hoopoes, which no doubt afford a hint as to the menu formerly available.

Close to the Caravanserai is an underground chamber, where a spring, as of old, wells up silently to fill the square stone basin. Beyond the basin, two stone ledges flank a small niche, which was probably for a lamp. A number of lamps was found heaped together before the entrance to the chamber, which, at some period considerably subsequent to the final destruction of the palace, seems to have been used for a shrine. Among the many *ex-votos* discovered within the basin, which was choked with mud, the most interesting is a circular hut-urn, revealing close affinities with those of prehistoric Italy and Etruria, and containing the nude figure of a goddess. The hands, upraised in the act of receiving adoration, bear marks suggestive of stigmata. A further discovery in the vicinity was that of four massive piers, originally, it would seem, vaulted over by corbelled arches, with stepped intervals for the passage of flood waters from the hill-side above. The stonework thus excavated is nearly 70 feet in length, and formed part of a great viaduct leading to an imposing portico which ascended by a columned stairway, with terraces at intervals, to the southern front of the palace.

Roughly polygonal in outline, and oriented exactly north and south, the palace occupies the crest of a low hill, almost on a level with the modern high-road from Candia, but falling away fairly steeply on the remaining sides. The decline is particularly marked on the east, where one looks out across a small valley, with olive-grounds descending on either side to the bed of the Kairatos. A great central court, about 20,000 square feet in area, was enclosed on

all sides by a bewildering complex of buildings, several stories in height, especially on the east, where, owing to the fall of the ground, no fewer than five stories rose one above another. The principal entrance, as we have seen, was on the north, facing in the direction of the port, a few miles distant; and it may be significant that numerous marks in trident form have been found on the stones in the vicinity of this, the Sea Gate. From without, the general aspect of the palace seems to have been one of massiveness, unrelieved by towers, spires, domes or pinnacles, though broken here and there by glimpses of palms and flowers, where garden-terraces opened in which the Court might saunter. Windows and balconies likewise appear, from the frescoes, to have afforded the Knossian ladies ample opportunities for watching whatever might be going on—a pastime still dear to Mediterranean femininity. In one fragment<sup>1</sup> we see a window-grille resembling the *mesh-rabiyeh* work of Turkish and Egyptian houses, though the Minoan woman seems to have been entirely free from any hint of Oriental seclusion.

Though remains of an earlier fortress-keep have been found on the north side of the court, the palace of the Golden Age was devoid of any kind of fortification. In many respects, indeed, it was astonishingly modern in its appointments. Egg-stands and cups, candlesticks and inkstands, flower-pots, vases and other domestic articles show how closely in some ways the life of Minoan Knossos approximated to our own. Particularly noteworthy is the system of water-supply and sewerage, which displays a scientific thoroughness and efficiency not to be met with again in Europe till the nineteenth century after Christ, while the scrupulous care paid to sanitation is further shown by the

<sup>1</sup> Evans, *Palace of Minos*, II, ii, 603, fig. 376

large circular walled pits for refuse constructed on the west, and evidently emptied from time to time. The principal residential portion of the palace was the east wing, facing the sun. Here, naturally, are the apartments of the king and queen, approached by a magnificent processional stair, which, with its painted columns, and walls frescoed with huge 8-shaped shields—a form of decoration perhaps hinting at a period of aggression and conquest—cannot but stir the most sluggish imagination. Sir Arthur Evans has vividly described his own experience when, during an attack of fever, he was temporarily lodging in the palace itself.

Tempted in the warm moonlight to look down the staircase—well the whole place seemed to awake awhile to life and movement. Such was the force of the illusion that the Priest-King with his plumed lily-crown, great ladies, tightly-girdled, flounced and corseted, long-stoled priests, and, after them, a retinue of elegant but sinewy youths . . . passed and re-passed on the flights below.

From the columned hall at the foot of the great stairway one reaches the King's Megaron, which, from the frequent recurrence of the sacred symbol on its walls, has been named the Hall of the Double Axe. Upon the walls hang replicas of some of the great shields of mottled bull's hide that once adorned it. Traces of a wooden throne are to be seen against the wall on the left, while another, possibly, occupied a similar position in the further section of the apartment, beyond which opens a sheltered and sunny loggia. Here one may picture the king seated in state: beardless, an embroidered cloth about his loins, and his waist unnaturally contracted in the characteristic Minoan fashion. A chain of golden lilies—the Minoan sacred flower—is about his neck, and upon his head, with its long ebon locks falling over the shoulder, is perhaps the golden lily-crown, surmounted by a crest of peacock plumes, that he wears in the

wonderful fresco which has been replaced in replica in its original position near the south porch of the palace. We see the gay toilettes of the women contrasting curiously with the semi-nudity of the men: we note the fan-bearers with their tall plumed fans on either side of the throne, and the guards leaning on their long spears—perhaps the negro spearsmen whose presence at Knossos is attested by a fresco. Upon the incense-laden air, stained with rosy light from the red parchment panes above the entrance, steal the throbbing of lyres, the soft plangence of flutes: then the musicians cease playing, and conches blare hoarsely in invocation of the Divine Spirit as the ministrant—perhaps the king in person—advances reverently to pour a libation before a wreathed bætylic shaft crowned with the Double Axe.

Ghosts of the past might well lurk in the dark and crooked corridor communicating with the Queen's Megaron. There, however, all but the most gracious of phantoms are banished by the charm of this beautiful apartment, which, as Sir Arthur Evans has said, calls up a vision of social amenities not easily paralleled in the ancient world. Here, as in the Hall of the Double Axe, we must picture the walls as originally panelled with gypsum and roofed with one of those gorgeous and intricate ceilings of painted stucco of which remains have been discovered. The gaiety and charm of this Ægean drawing-room are vividly brought home to us by the careful restorations that have been effected. Architecturally designed to enjoy the maximum of privacy, it is, none the less, perfectly aired and lighted. The large fresco of dolphins and other fishes swimming among rocks covered with spongy growths is extraordinarily realistic, and the whole apartment, with its delightful little panels of dancing ladies that occupied the pillars, and its seats so admirably

arranged for conversation and doubtless once heaped with brightly coloured cushions, is characterized by sensibility and refinement in the highest degree.

The discovery of a cupped slab of limestone shows that some kind of pavement game was played here. Other games also doubtless beguiled the leisure of the queen and her ladies, such as that represented by the magnificent royal gaming-board, in gold, silver, crystal and *kyanos*, which was found in another part of the palace. The stepped base of a Double Axe found on the stylobate shows that here, as elsewhere, the sacral nature of the palace and its occupants was not forgotten. Adjoining the Megaron is an elegant little bathroom, once containing a painted clay hip-bath, whose fragments were found close to the entrance, while further away, but in direct communication with the Megaron, is a latrine which, like all the other sanitary arrangements of the palace, is surprisingly anticipatory of modern methods.

Evidently a vast host of servants must have been required to ensure that the life of the great palace ran with ease and smoothness. In the famous "Cup-Bearer" fresco found in one of the corridors we see one of these—the bronzed, curly-haired youth, so proudly bearing before him his great silver libation vase. The emergence from the debris of this wonderful figure, still as fresh in colour as when first painted more than two thousand five hundred years before, perturbed even the stolid workman set to guard it by night. "Waking with a start, he was conscious of a mysterious presence; the animals round began to low and neigh, and there were visions about; "*φαντάζει*,"' he said, in summing up his experiences next morning, "'the whole place spooks!'"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Evans, *Palace of Minos*, II, ii, 708.

Courtiers and guards, priests, officials and servants must have made up a fairly large population, but in addition to these the palace must obviously have contained a whole army of craftsmen—painters and sculptors, workers in gold and bronze, in ivory and faience. To the last-named we owe two masterly little groups in painted “porcelain” representing a cow and a wild goat suckling their young, which are now in the Candia Museum. Still more numerous must have been the potters, whose art ranged from the most delicate “egg-shell,” or graceful vases adorned with designs of flowers or sea-creatures, to the huge *pithoi*—worthy of the Forty Thieves—for the storing of oil, the sale of which must have contributed largely to the royal revenues. Some of these jars, over 7 feet high, may still be seen in the oil-press north of the royal apartments.

The principal magazines, both for oil and grain, were, however, on the west, where they open off a long corridor running north and south, and still bearing traces of the conflagration by which Knossos perished. Besides the tall jars, one observes, sunken in the stone pavement, a series of rectangular cists, which may have contained treasures. But the west wing as a whole seems to have been consecrated to other purposes, of greater dignity. A columnar shrine, resembling that which divides the groups of gossiping ladies in the “grand-stand” fresco, occupied the central portion of the façade, consisting of superimposed *loggie*, which fronted the great central court, while in an adjoining crypt are two square bætylic pillars, incised some thirty times over with the emblem of the Double Axe. Of especial interest is the so-called Throne Room, where the Priest-King evidently held consistories and ceremonies of lustration. Approached from the court by an ante-chamber, which possibly served a somewhat similar purpose to the



narthex of an early Christian church, it contains a high-backed throne of gypsum—the oldest, probably, in the world—with stone benches on either side for councillors or officiants in the mysteries; while facing the throne is a lustral basin resembling that previously mentioned west of the northern entrance. Plumed griffins painted on the wall crouch guardant on either side of the throne, while two more—represented, like the other two, as lying beside a stream fringed with tall water-plants—guard the door of an inner sanctuary. The spirals and rosettes above the griffins' foreshoulders are the earliest examples of a pattern which, spreading successively through Cyprus, Rhodes, Phœnicia and Asia Minor, was gradually carried northwards and eastwards by way of the Caucasus to Altai-Iran, and is found to the present day in China, where—minus the rosette—it is still confined, as in Cretan-Mycenean art, to fabulous animals.<sup>1</sup>

Ranged on the floor of the Throne Room, the excavators found several alabaster lamps, of tasteful design, which the shrine attendants had evidently been about to fill from a large jar laid on its side at the very moment when the final disaster fell. Not less interesting was the discovery in the southern area of the palace of a tiny chapel with all its cult objects and ritual furniture practically complete. Though dating from a period subsequent to the fall of Knossos, when the ruins of the palace were partially occupied by squatters, it yielded indications that the site had been already consecrated to worship ever since the earliest foundation of the palace: and it is probable, therefore, that "the character and arrangement of the cult objects, so perfectly preserved *in situ*, perpetuate in their main outlines the earlier tradition. We have here, in fact, the best retro-

<sup>1</sup> Bossert, *Alikreta*, 1923, pp. 17-18 (55).

spective evidence regarding the cult forms in the Palace itself.”<sup>1</sup> Beyond the assortment of offertory vessels reposing upon the floor, a small circular tripod altar stands on a kind of low dais, strewn with water-worn pebbles. Behind this, on a raised ledge, likewise strewn with pebbles, are set twin pairs of “horns of consecration” made of plastered clay, from which originally rose small bronze double axes. A miniature double axe of steatite was found beside the left-hand pair of horns. Besides these there are five crudely moulded figurines representing the goddess herself and her votaries. A dove rests upon her head, and a male figure, wearing a singular costume, holds another dove towards her as if in offering. The discovery of this little shrine, practically undisturbed since the advent of the last worshipper, is unique, though important deposits of cult objects have been found in other parts of the palace. Not the least curious of such finds—a marble cross—naturally commanded the profoundest reverence on the part of the local pope, and confirmed the belief of the workmen that the frescoed figures on the palace walls represented ancient saints. As Sir Arthur Evans shows, however, the cross is actually a conventionalized star, “a symbol of the great Minoan goddess under her chthonic aspect”—*ἔσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις*.

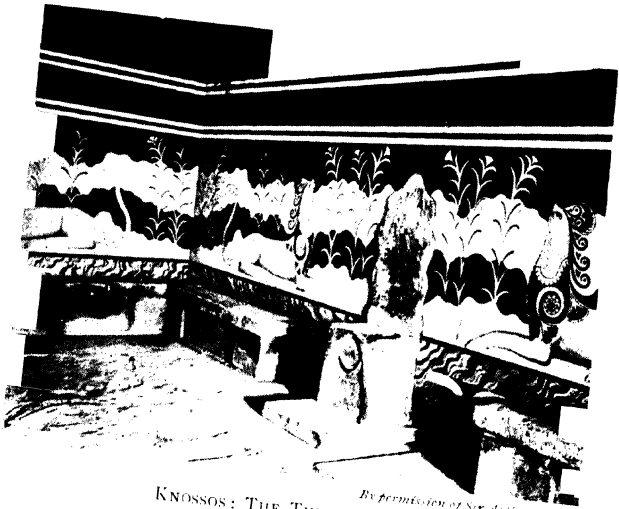
The sight of two door-jambs protruding from an earthen bank above a mule-track a little north-east of the great palace led to the excavation of what was apparently a splendid summer villa of the Priest-Kings. The grand staircase, with its broad central flight, and lateral wings ascending from the landing, is not its least striking feature. Of exceptional interest is the megaron, about  $32\frac{1}{2}$  feet in area—a great hall divided by rows of columns into a central nave and two aisles. At the end of the hall a kind of

<sup>1</sup> Evans, *Palace of Minos*, II, i, 335.

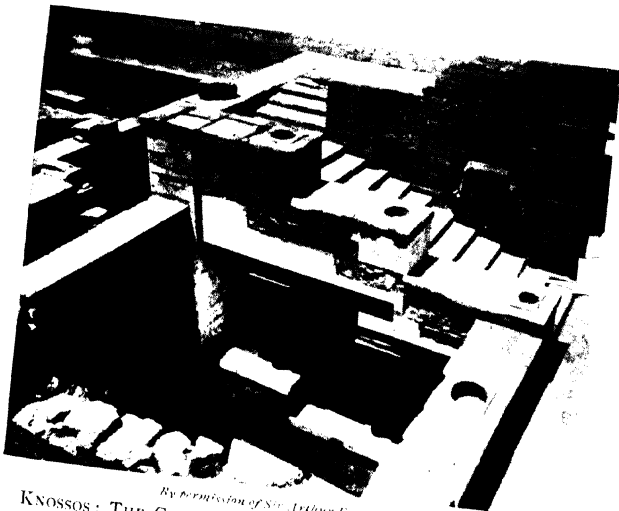
chancel-screen encloses a raised tribune with an exedra containing a throne, before which still stood one of the characteristic Minoan pedestal-lamps of carven steatite. The obvious resemblance to an early Christian basilica is the less surprising if, as Sir Arthur Evans believes, we have here the prototype of the Royal Stoa at Athens, from which in turn both Roman and Christian basilicas were derived.

Amid the ruins of a large private house on the north-west of the palace the astonishing discovery was made of a large quantity of frescoes literally stacked one upon another. The average thickness of the plaster was from 4 to 6 millimetres only, and the difficulty of extracting the fragments without reducing them to a mere heap of powder may be imagined. They were covered with damp paper, over which plaster of Paris was then spread, and by this means eighty-four trays were successively filled and removed—a task which occupied four expert workmen for more than five weeks. Pieced together with the utmost care and patience, the frescoes were found to be in the finest style of the period which heralded Knossos's golden age. Blue monkeys forage among rocks and papyrus stems, a blue roller preens his wings in a bower of wild roses, *pancratium* lilies and other flowers, and a fountain tosses its crystal jet against the sun, to fall back in a shower of sparkling drops. A fountain of this kind was quite unknown to the great contemporary civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and its presence at Knossos is one more proof among many of the remarkable knowledge of hydrostatics possessed by the Minoan engineers.

Among the various plants represented in these and similar frescoes at Knossos especial interest attaches to the ivy-like sprays, which are indubitably sacral in character. They



*By permission of Sir Arthur Evans.*  
 KNOSSOS: THE THRONE ROOM.



*By permission of Sir Arthur Evans and of Messrs. MacMillan & Co.*  
 KNOSSOS: THE GRAND STAIRCASE IN THE PALACE OF MINOS.



are in part derived from the papyrus symbol and sceptre of the Egyptian goddess, Wazet, whose concealment of her son, the infant Horus, in a thicket of papyrus inspired the Hebrew legend of Moses hidden by his mother in the bulrushes. Part of her spiritual character, writes Sir Arthur Evans, "seems to have early been infused into the Minoan goddess—especially as regards her chthonic aspect." It is possible that the plant may have been regarded as possessing in itself certain magic powers of a similar nature to those of the Golden Bough which the hero of the *Æneid* was bidden to pluck before making his descent to the shades of the Under-world.

From the Theatral Area a well-paved Royal Road leads in a north-westerly direction to what has been named the Little Palace, situated close to Sir Arthur Evans' own Villa Ariadne, on a slope overlooking the main road from Candia. Though there are evident traces of earlier structures, the palace as a whole seems to have been built immediately after the great earthquake which laid Knossos in ruins about 1700 B.C. The series of stately halls, opening one into another, are unsurpassed even by the Great Palace itself. It has been suggested that the Little Palace was founded for expiatory purposes, and a magnificent rhyton in the form of a black bull's head, which was found in the ruins, may well have been employed to propitiate the powers of the underworld, as personified in the mighty Bull to the tossing of whose horns the earthquake was perhaps attributed. Nothing could exceed the realistic power of this wonderful work of art, which is now in the Candia Museum. The nostrils are inlaid in red and white stone, the eyes are of rock crystal: between them is lightly incised the sacral Double Axe. The horns, apparently of wood wrapped in gold foil, had perished, but as the sculptor himself had left

a *graffito* sketch of his work on the vessel's base, it was a simple matter to restore them in their original form.

In a conversation with the writer at the Villa Ariadne, Sir Arthur Evans remarked in 1930 that little further remained to be done, and that his work at Knossos was now practically concluded. But out of Crete, as of Africa, *semper aliquid novi*. The most important discovery, after that of the Great Palace itself, was actually reserved for the present year (1931), only a few months before the publication of this book. The chance finding by a peasant of a magnificent gold signet, which could hardly have belonged to any but a member of the royal dynasty of Minos, and the consequent exploration of the rocky hillside south of the Palace, revealed what is nothing less than an elaborate mausoleum of the Priest-Kings of Knossos. The dwelling and private chapel of—most probably—its priestly guardian were discovered close by.

The mausoleum itself consists of two stories. From the southern terrace of the Palace an approach bordered in ancient times by pots of flowering plants led to a small temple, its roof supported by twin columns, and its walls covered with painted stucco. In front of the temple was an entrance pavilion, from whose roof, as also from an adjoining roof-terrace, occupying the entire width of the building, spectators could watch the funeral games and dances performed in a small open court below. Beneath the temple a two-pillared crypt communicated by a lofty stone portal with the burial chamber, hewn entirely out of the rock and containing a central pillar of gypsum. The former splendour of this chamber may be gauged by the fact that its walls were lined with glittering gypsum slabs, while between colossal beams of cypress-wood the rocky vault of the roof gleamed, like the sky itself, with the deep blue of *kyanos*.

Alike in crypt and tomb-chamber the massive stone blocks are incised with the usual Double Axe symbol of the great Mother-Goddess, Mistress of heaven and earth and the waters beneath, in whose benevolent custody were laid the royal dead. On the stones of the entrance are seen the same tridentine marks as at the Sea Gate of the Palace—representative of the marine dominion of the goddess “through whose protecting grace the Sea Kings of Crete themselves held sway.” This aspect of the Minoan goddess, curiously suggested also by the *graffito* sketch of an oared vessel on a wall of the inner chamber, is recalled by the royal signet-ring—“the ring of Minos,” as Sir Arthur Evans aptly terms it—where the deity is depicted in the act of guiding her magic craft across the sea. It is extraordinary that Diodorus Siculus actually records a Cretan tradition that the body of Minos was buried in a sepulchre of precisely similar description to that of the present mausoleum—tomb below, temple above. According to Diodorus, the temple in question was dedicated to Aphrodite, who however is here simply “the Minoan goddess in her celestial aspect.”

It is clear that the tomb-chamber, with its central pillar, had served not only as a tomb but as a shrine, and the immense antiquity of this funerary cult is proved by the discovery of a libation-table, of greenish stone and of a form adopted in the earliest Minoan period from pre-dynastic Egyptian models. Unhappily, the priceless treasures which the chamber must once have contained have long since disappeared—probably stolen about 1520 B.C., when the sanctuary seems to have been severely damaged by earthquake. Only by a lucky chance, doubtless, did the “ring of Minos” itself escape the notice of the despoilers. Of great interest, on the other hand, are the numerous ritual vessels found, including some curious clay censers. Along with these vessels were found



tiny "milk pots" for the tending of the tame serpents which, according to a belief still existing in various parts of the world, represented the spirits of the ancestral dead. It is probably to this snake-cult of prehistoric Crete that we must look for the ultimate explanation of the snake's presence in the ritual of far other lands and ages of Europe, from the mysterious serpent Erichthonios and the sacred snakes of Asklepios to the snakes which, at Cucullo in the Abruzzi, are allowed to writhe freely about the church and altar during the festival of S. Domenico di Foligno. The bronze figurine of a goddess grasping two snakes which was found not long ago near Cucullo obviously corresponds to the statuettes of the Minoan Mother-Goddess, ceremonially robed and mitred, in the Candia Museum. The serpents that twine about her arms and head-dress have no malignant significance, and merely denote her chthonic aspect as Queen of the Underworld.

In one respect Crete still keeps her secret. Hundreds of inscriptions in the Minoan tongue, from the earlier pictographs to the later linear script, have been found—the oldest written records in Europe—but so far they elude all efforts to decipher them, and will no doubt continue to do so till the discovery of some Cretan "Rosetta Stone." When that happens—and it may happen at any moment, in Crete or elsewhere—a flood of illumination will most likely be cast upon that long-lost Ægean world with which the origins of art and religion in later Hellas are so intimately interwoven. Even in classical times the old language seems to have lingered on among the Eteocretan inhabitants at the eastern end of the island, who were probably descendants of the old Minoan stock, and Eteocretan inscriptions in Greek characters still exist, though they cannot be read. Equally baffling is the remarkable disk <sup>1</sup> found at Phaistos,

<sup>1</sup> In the Candia Museum.

bearing a long pictographic inscription, which, however, is probably not Cretan but Lycian in origin. Even among those documents which are undisputedly Cretan, few, probably, have a literary value. So cultivated a people as the Cretans may well have possessed a literature of their own, but over the songs and the tales of Crete time's dark waters have doubtless long and irrevocably closed. Yet who can say what wealth of information as to Crete's religion and history, her relations with other powers, and her activities overseas, especially on the Greek mainland, the mysterious characters may not tantalizingly withhold? Perhaps, after all, we may yet some day learn, if not what song the Sirens sang, the chorus—war-chant or harvest-hymn—which the sinewy marchers sing so lustily on the famous carven fragment from Hagia Triada in the museum at Candia, and catch the far-off echo of litanies that once echoed nightly down the painted corridors of the great palace, till the last night of all descended, and the smoke of her burning rolled sullenly to the sky.



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